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## **MINARET AND PIPE-LINE**





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YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY IN THE NEAR EAST

By  
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*Translated from the German*  
*by*  
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## INTRODUCTION

THIS book was written in August and September 1938, when Europe seemed to be on the verge of war. A period of outward calm has since then been succeeded by a fresh wave of nervousness and tension. The man in the street hardly dares to make plans for more than two or three months ahead. The countries of the Near East are in a somewhat similar position. They know that each move in European politics affects their destinies. They seem to be holding their breath, waiting for what may happen, and refraining from major decisions. Life nevertheless goes on in each country. Small changes occur here and there. Individually, they do not amount to much; but, taken together, they show that even in the short space of seven months that has elapsed since "Finis" was written to this book, the aspect of western Asia as a whole has undergone a change. The following pages, therefore, contain a short summary of the events which have brought about these changes.

To begin with Turkey. On 11th November 1938, after a long illness, Kemal Ataturk, the first President of the Turkish Republic, died. Post-War Turkey was the work of his hands, his brain, his will. Even before his death many people asked themselves what would become of the young State after its founder and leader had passed away. Few prophesied a normal and prosperous development. Although it may as yet be too early to judge, it certainly seems as if the few optimists had already been proved the better prophets. Ataturk's old companion in arms, his companion at work and in politics, Ismet Inonu, was unanimously elected his successor. Nobody doubts that such was the wish of the dead President despite the fact that the two men had not seen eye to eye on all questions during the last years of Ataturk's life. There had been, for example, the question of how to adjust the old—and now somewhat declining—friendship with Soviet Russia with the new friend-



ship with England that had sprung up in the winter of 1935-6. There had also been the question of what method would prove most efficacious in dealing with the French over the problem of the Hatay. And there was another highly controversial issue, as to whether the speeding up of the economic development of the country by State initiative and State credits would prove more successful in the long run than the slower thrifty methods of the first fourteen years.

It is possible that in domestic policy Ismet Inonu may slightly alter the course hitherto held by Ataturk. Jelal Bayar, who was the advocate of a more expansive economic policy, has had to relinquish the premiership. In matters of religion Ismet Inonu's views are believed to be less revolutionary than were those of his predecessor. In the sphere of foreign policy, however, the opinions of the late President and of the new coincide. After laying down the premiership Ismet Inonu took lessons in English. After becoming President, he appointed the experienced and able Foreign Minister, Rushdu Aras, as Ambassador to the Court of St. James's. He thereby showed to all outward appearances that he has fully realized the possibilities inherent in a close Anglo-Turkish friendship without at the same time either discarding his sympathy for Moscow or desiring to impair the good relations existing between Berlin and Angora. The question of the Hatay had already been solved to the satisfaction of Turkey in the summer of 1938 by the prudent methods which Ismet had advocated and by the stimulus imparted to its solution by Ataturk's personality. During the following winter the autonomous province of Hatay—formerly the Sanjak of Alexandretta—turned into the Republic of Hatay. It at once adopted Turkish legislation, Turkish currency, and Turkish administration. The summer of 1939 is evidently going to witness the formal return of this erstwhile Ottoman province to the Turkish State, and also the conclusion of a closer treaty of friendship between Turkey and France.

France has not been able to come to any satisfactory arrangement in the remaining parts of her Syrian mandate. The state of this troublous region is more unsettled than ever. The Syrian Prime Minister, Mardam Beg, returned from one of his long visits to Paris during the winter without bringing home any

tangible results. He did not succeed in getting the Franco-Syrian treaty ratified by the French Chamber. His Cabinet was obliged to resign. Other Governments followed without holding office for more than a few weeks. Strikes, demonstrations, and street-fighting testified to the state of Syrian feeling. The new French High Commissioner, Puaux, who succeeded to de Martel, left Paris in February with public professions of goodwill for Syria. He arrived in Damascus to be met with riots, shooting, and stone-throwing. He succeeded in restoring some sort of order. He intends to review the situation and to make fresh proposals for settling the differences between Syria and France. Meanwhile political feeling in Syria is growing more and more impatient, the minorities are becoming increasingly intractable, the chances of a peaceful and enduring settlement seem to be diminishing. Syria is like a pot of boiling water over which a lid has been tightly screwed down. Nobody can judge what will happen when the lid is taken off.

In the neighbouring country, Palestine, the lid blew off some time ago and the pot has been boiling over for several years; it has not yet proved possible to extinguish the fire burning beneath the Palestinian pot. The British Royal Commissions sent out to report on the situation have hardly been able even to damp it down. The section on Palestine in this book ends with the arrival of the Woodhead Commission in Jerusalem and with the unexpected successes achieved by the Arab revolt in the summer of 1938. The revolt was suppressed by military force. Afterwards the Woodhead Commission published its report which contained three separate and elaborate plans for the partition of Palestine. All three were subsequently proved to be impracticable. Henceforth partition ceased to be the basis of British policy in Palestine. The situation was thus restored to what it had been two years before. Mr. Malcolm MacDonald thereupon decided to embark on a new course and summoned a conference to meet in London to discuss Palestinian affairs. The Mufti of Jerusalem was to be excluded from its membership. It seemed at first as if none of the Mufti's followers would accept the invitation to the conference. The exiled leaders of the Arab Nationalists were thereupon permitted to leave the Seychelles. They visited the Mufti at his retreat in the Lebanon and

took their orders from him. They agreed to go to London. A fresh difficulty then arose. The Mufti's party wished to exclude the Nashashibi Party from the conference. The British Government wished them to be present. A period of bickering ensued that was ultimately ended through a succession of private conversations between the neighbouring Arab countries.

The Palestine Conference opened in London on 7th February 1939, after much delay. Delegates were present from the two Arab parties in Palestine as well as from Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Transjordan, and Yemen. There were no delegates from the country most closely linked with Palestine—Syria. There were representatives of the various Zionist and Jewish organizations; especially from Palestine, Great Britain, and the United States of America. The Arabs refused to recognize the right of the Jews to be represented at the conference and declined to meet them. Two separate conferences had, therefore, to be held. The British Prime Minister, Mr. Chamberlain, had to deliver his inaugural address twice, once to the Arabs, once to the Jews, varying his opening and closing sentences appropriately. The British delegates conferred now with the Jews and now with the Arabs. On both sides all the old and well-tried arguments were brought forward. Neither Arabs nor Jews were prepared to modify their demands nor to listen to those of the other side. The only fresh development produced by the conference was the publication of the MacMahon correspondence of the years 1915–16 with Shereef Hussein. The Arabs had always based their claims on the promises made by MacMahon during the War. Great Britain had hitherto proclaimed that these promises had been fulfilled by the system of mandates created in Palestine, Syria, and Iraq. Now, for the first time, Great Britain was ready to reopen the discussion over the question of what had actually been promised. There proved to be many differences of opinion as to what the original texts were intended by their authors to mean and over the proper way of translating them. Finally the whole correspondence was published. The British and the Arabs continued to hold divergent views on the interpretation to be placed on these documents. But *The Times* conceded that the Arabs had more foundation for their claims than had hitherto been realized. The publication of the MacMahon-

Hussein letters may therefore, be taken as a moral, and perhaps also a juridical, strengthening of the Arab cause.

It may be asked why it took the British Government twenty years to find out that their diplomatic representatives during the War had promised more than British diplomatist and strategist were willing to concede in after years. The answer to this question tends to prove the growing weight of the Arab countries and the ever-increasing preoccupation of world politics with Near Eastern affairs. For Great Britain can no longer afford to disregard Arab wishes. On the other hand, however, she finds it necessary to maintain her close friendship with the United States because she realizes that the united front of the western democracies can no longer make itself felt without the help of America. It is well known, moreover, that the American Government has always championed the Zionist cause in Palestine. Hence it would not be expedient for England simply to adopt the easy course and to give the Arabs what the Arabs wish to have. For then world Jewry would cry out at a breach of promise and many pro-British sympathies might be lost in the United States. If, on the other hand, it can be proved that promises were made to the Arabs prior to the issue of the Balfour Declaration, the whole aspect of things changes. The publication of the MacMahon-Hussein letters afford proof of such promises having been implied even if they were not actually made. Thus their publication may serve British policy as well as the Arab cause.

While the Arabic and the English texts of the MacMahon-Hussein correspondence were still in process of interpretation, an effort was made to bring the Arabs and the Jews together around a single table. A few informal meetings took place without any formal Arab recognition of the Jewish delegates. These meetings were as unsuccessful as the Conference itself. In March the British Government, which had up to then tried to effect a compromise between the contending parties, abandoned the attempt and put forward instead its own tentative proposals for a settlement. Taken as a whole they implied great concessions to the Arabs; the immigration of Jews was not to be entirely stopped, but it was nevertheless to be severely restricted; the Jews were for ever to remain a minority in Palestine; land sales

to Jews were only to be allowed in certain restricted areas; and a period of five years of increasing self-government was to lead to the independence of Palestine on the model of the independence accorded to Iraq.

The Jewish delegates of every denomination flatly rejected these proposals even as a basis for future negotiations. The Arabs at first seemed well satisfied. But later on they also refused to accept the British suggestions chiefly because the granting of an independent Government after a five-year period of transition would have been subject to Jewish goodwill in co-operating with the self-governing authorities. Once more it can be said that the situation that had existed before the Conference had come into being again. Ever since the termination of the London Conference informal negotiations have been proceeding in Cairo without hitherto leading to any positive result. In as much as the arguments on both sides always remain invariable it seems most unlikely that a settlement satisfactory to all parties will be reached. The British Government is therefore now confronted with the necessity of formulating its policy in a final shape and of seeing that it is carried into effect. Only thus can Great Britain hope to achieve some form of enduring appeasement in Palestine and to regain some of the prestige lost in Arab countries during the last few years.

The feeling of unrest in Iraq which is ever-present under the calm exterior of everyday life made itself apparent in a change of Governments when the pro-British Nuri-es-Said Pasha succeeded Jamil-el-Midfai as Prime Minister. Then, in February and March 1939, there were rumours of a conspiracy against the life of King Ghazi. Hikmet Suleiman, Prime Minister in the days of Sidky Bekr, and several of his followers were arrested. Finally, on April 3rd, King Ghazi found his death by an accident. He was driving his own car home to the Royal Palace at night when he lost control of the steering-wheel—so the police report declared—and crashed into a lamp-post. The feeling of general mistrust is still so alive in Arab countries, and also the belief that some sinister motive must always lie behind the death of any high-standing personage, that the people of Mosul were easily led to believe that the British had murdered their King. They therefore set upon and murdered the British

Consul. Apologies were duly proffered by the Iraq Government to the British Government, the offenders were arrested and sentenced, and the affair amicably settled because Great Britain had every reason for desiring to avoid new causes of friction in the Near East at that time.

For Iraq the death of King Ghazi was a severe blow. He may not have been as energetic a ruler as the country needed and he was certainly still very young. Nevertheless, whereas Turkey, a fully consolidated State, has but lost its first leader with the death of Atatürk, Iraq has already lost its second king, although it has been an independent State for only seven years. Moreover, whereas the new Turkish President İsmet İnönü is still one of the older generation, Iraq's new king already belongs to the third generation, for he is a child of four years old. He bears his grandfather's name of Feisal. And it is to be hoped that as he grows up he will develop some of the courage, the gift of leadership, and the fine spirit of the first King Feisal. It is also to be hoped that in the meantime the men upon whom falls the task of governing the country will be able to steer it safely through the rapids of a turbulent world.

In Iran the completion of the great Trans-Iranian railway that is to free the country from undue Russian influence coincided with very strained economic relations between Teheran and Moscow. The acquisition of economic independence is a slow affair. The country is as yet dependent upon the sale of the greater part of its produce to Soviet Russia. Accordingly, in February, some of the ablest officials in the Iranian Ministry of Commerce left for Moscow to try and achieve a new economic agreement. A few weeks previously a new commercial treaty had been signed in Berlin between Germany and Iran. For a short time Franco-Iranian relations were exceptionally strained. A French newspaper had published a joke about the Shah. Nothing is more apt to incense the Iranian Government than a disparaging remark in a foreign newspaper. Every line written about Iran in the foreign Press is examined with the closest attention. Even harmless remarks often give offence. The pun about the 'Shah' and the 'Chat' was deemed to be of sufficient gravity for the Iranian Government to break off diplomatic relations with France. After several weeks of negotiation

the French apologies were accepted and diplomatic intercourse was resumed between the two countries.

All such minor occurrences were nevertheless overshadowed by the great event which took place in the spring of 1939 when the Iranian Crown Prince was married to the sister of the King of Egypt. Great festivities were held in Cairo during March and in Teheran during April. The Near Eastern States were represented by prominent personages at the ceremonies in Teheran. Thus many personal contacts were made possible at the very moment when the international situation seemed to be at its gravest.

Some of the changes recorded above tend to strengthen, others to weaken, the countries that have experienced them. There is one feeling, however, that they share in common. They feel that a decision is being forced upon them with ever-increasing urgency. Shall they take sides with the authoritarian Powers or with the Western democracies? The answer to this question may depend partly upon the trend of Near Eastern politics. If Turkey takes one side, perhaps Iraq may find it expedient to take the other. The most important consideration, however, in the eyes of all these States is the answer to the question: which of the two combinations will prove the stronger? Throughout the summer and autumn of 1938 the scales fell in favour of the democracies and, above all, in that of England. The events of the spring of 1939 may have tended to alter the balance. Only when these grave questions are decided, or if a lasting peace seems assured, will forces that to-day still lie hidden have the freedom to evolve and to hasten forward the development of the Near Eastern countries. Only then will it be possible to say whither the Near East is tending.

[TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: In accordance with the Turco-French Treaty signed in June 1939, the Hatay was ceded to Turkey, and at the end of that month the withdrawal of the French garrison began.]

## A LAYMAN'S GLOSSARY

### ABAYE, ABBAH

is the Arab's cloak, which he wears when he is going out. It may be coarse and heavy, made of unbleached wool, or natural grey, white, or black. Sometimes it is made of a transparent material thin as a veil, usually black, richly gold-embroidered. The abbah has sleeves which are hardly ever used, for the Arab wears it simply slung over his shoulders. In Iraq the women also wear abbahs with sleeves as a wrap in place of the black shawl that is wrongly called a veil by Europeans (*see also* CHADUR).

AGA, chief, commander.

### ATA

means father. ATABEG means 'Father-Prince', a title given to slaves or the descendants of slaves who acted as regents during the minority of a ruler. Not infrequently such a position led to the foundation of a dynasty.

### BAIRAM

is the greatest religious festival of Islam. There is the lesser feast of Bairam which brings to an end the fast of Ramadan, and seventy days later, on the tenth day of the month Dulhijeh—the month of pilgrimage—comes the greater feast of Bairam. This is the culminating point of the festivities for which pilgrims from all over the world stream to Mecca. It is sacred to the memory of Abraham's sacrifice, and every Moslem must slay his offering. Any one who is unable to make the pilgrimage to Mecca goes to some holy spot near his own home. Every child is given a new garment for the feast of Bairam—in the case of poor people, it is the only one in the year—and every adult puts on either something new or at least a holiday dress. Thus the occasion is a festive one even for those who do not directly par-



ticipate. New silk robes glisten in the sun, and colour schemes in the East are wonderfully sumptuous without ever being crude—a warm yellow combined with the most various tones of red and purple, much white and many delicately striped materials, such as white and pale blue, white and purple, white and brown. Amidst these are the black 'veils' of the women, which only make the coloured skirts or wide trousers worn underneath appear the more gorgeous. In many places the feast of Bairam turns into a sort of picnic. People visit the graves of their relatives and camp there for the day, vivid, prodigal sweeps of colour moving amid the subdued tones of a barren landscape.

### BAST

means sanctuary. In Persia holy places, certain mosques, foreign legations, and consulates, the royal mews, and telegraph offices are bast, that is places of sanctuary in which a fugitive is safe from the arm of the law or from the oppressor. Telegraph offices are included in the Bast, because the populace believed that all telegraph wires led to the foot of the throne in the Shah's palace. The Persian revolution in 1906 began by the Teheran shopkeepers, who had demonstrated their democratic feelings by closing the bazaars, going to the grounds of the British Legation to escape the Shah's reprisals. From forty men on the first day the number rose to twelve thousand, so that the affair turned into a sort of popular festival on the carefully tended lawns of the legation. In the end the Shah gave way and granted a constitution.

### BEGLERBEG

means Prince of Princes. In Turkey it is more particularly a military title. Beglerbeg is the Commander-in-Chief. In Iran Beglerbeg is the governor of a province.

### BYZANTIUM

is the 'seven-named imperial city upon seven hills and with seven towers' built beside the Golden Horn. To the seven ancient names—Byzantium, Antonina, New Rome, the City of Constantine, the Centre of the Universe, the Perfection of Islam, the Universal Mother—has recently been added the

now official name Istanbul, a corruption of Constantinople. To European ears the pronunciation sounds like Stambul, because the I is almost inaudible. In Turkish the combination of S with a consonant alone is impossible, so Sparta becomes Isparta or Siparta, sport becomes isport and siportive, Alexandretta becomes Iskenderun.

### CADI

is a judge. He is of the Faqih class, of those who study the Koran and the moral traditions. The Cadi also has the administration of the Wakf under him (*see* WAKF).

### CALIPH

means the successor; in particular the successor to the Prophet. The quarrel between Shiites and Sunnites originated over the legitimacy of the succession.

### CHADUR (Persian), CHARSHAFF (Turkish), ABBAH (Iraqian)

is what we wrongly call the 'veil' in Europe. It is a large black shawl in which a Moslem woman swathes herself from head to foot whenever she leaves the women's quarters in her home. Underneath she may be very smartly dressed. At the time when short skirts were in fashion, for example, it was evident in spite of the abbah that the ladies of Damascus had adopted that fashion. In many country districts of Iran this shawl was of a deep blue; among the Bedouin it is often white or unbleached. A woman holds the shawl across her face with one hand so that only the eyes are visible. In places where observances are very strictly complied with a small black veil or piece of lace is fastened across the face in addition. Although the purpose of the covering was intended to conceal a woman from all male eyes save those of her husband, it seems often to have had exactly the opposite effect. Lady Montagu, who was on terms of friendly intercourse with numbers of Turkish women, related at the beginning of the eighteenth century that thanks to the veil a great lady was not to be distinguished from her slave-girl, and therefore even the most jealous husband could not recognize his wife if he met her. 'This perpetual masquerade gives them entire liberty of following their inclinations without danger of dis-

covery. . . . The great ladies seldom let their gallants know who they are . . . you may easily imagine the number of faithful wives very small in a country where they have nothing to fear from a lover's indiscretion, since we see so many that have the courage to expose themselves to that in this world, and all the threatened punishments of the next, which is never preached to the Turkish damsels. Neither have they much to apprehend from the resentment of their husbands; those ladies that are rich having all their money in their own hands, which they take with them upon a divorce. . . .<sup>1</sup> Much the same was reported in Persian towns in pre-War days. To-day a movement for the 'unveiling' of women is passing through the whole of the Near East. In Turkey and Iran it has been carried out by the State. Nevertheless it is said that there are some conservative women who prefer never to go out at all rather than show their faces uncovered. In Syria and Iraq most women still go veiled.

#### CHATIBÉ

is the man who pronounces the prayer before the throne in the mosque on Fridays, the Moslem holiday, while on ordinary weekdays no priest functions but every believer prays independently.

#### DAGH, TAGH

means mountain in Turkish and Iranian.

#### DEFTER

is the list of taxpayers, an ancient Persian institution. DEFTERDAR is the clerk who looks after the books in the treasury, one of the highest dignitaries in the Ottoman empire, a member of the Divan.

#### DERVISH

means the 'threshold', and signifies humility and willingness to be trodden underfoot by all the world. Jelal-ed-Din, an adherent of the mystical Persian sect of the Sofi and a religious poet, became the founder in Asia Minor of the most ancient order of dervishes, the Mevlevi, the famous dancing dervishes. It was computed that there were in all seventy-two orders of

<sup>1</sup> Melville, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, p. 132.

dervishes as well as seventy-two sects of heretical Moslems (obviously intended to balance one another). The most famous order of dervishes is that of Hadji Begtash, who at the same time was patron of the Janissaries.

DIRHEM, a Persian coin.

#### DIVAN

is the long, low, cushioned seat that, until the most hideous Louis XVI and modernist trappings were introduced, was almost the only piece of furniture in a room and ran along three sides of the apartment. In the palace of a ruler the divan became a seat of honour upon which the dignitaries of state reclined. Thus the Divan—also called SOPHA—became synonymous with the State Council or Cabinet. In the Ottoman empire the Sultan was in the habit of attending Cabinet meetings, until one day a Turkoman peasant blundered into a Divan at which Mahomet II, the Conqueror, was presiding, looked round at the richly dressed, bearded worthies and inquired: 'Which of you has the good fortune to be the emperor?' Whereupon Mahomet went into a fit of rage, and the Grand Vizir took the opportunity permanently to do away with what must frequently have been the very trying presence of the ruler, under the pretext that his sacred person must in future be preserved from such insulting errors. Membership of the Divan—which met four days a week—entailed the observance of very strict ceremonial and order of precedence. Divan also means an index and was used both in Arabic and Persian to describe an alphabetically arranged collection of poems.

DRAGOMAN, interpreter.

#### EFFENDI

in Turkish means lord or master. The title is still used throughout the former Ottoman empire, and is perhaps most nearly equivalent to 'Your Honour' as used in Ireland. If one party to a conversation fails to understand the other, he politely indicates this by saying 'Effendim?' in an interrogative tone. In northern Arabia it is chiefly great estate owners who are given the title effendi, but in Iraq and also in Egypt it has in the

course of time largely been transferred to 'educated' townsmen because landowners have mostly come to live in the towns now.

## FEZ

is the red felt cap called tarboosh in Arabian countries. It is a comparatively recent form of headgear. In order to be smart the fez must be freshly ironed at frequent intervals on the shining hot brass blocks that stand in rows in the bazaars, looking like mortars turned upside down. The abolition of the fez in present-day Turkey is by no means the purely superficial matter that we Europeans are inclined to think. In the East it is a centuries-old tradition that the headgear shows what manner of man any one is, to what nation, religious community, or race he belongs, what his rank is. An important section in the legislative work of every Sultan was concerned with clothing and especially with head-coverings. An example is given in Hammer-Purgstall's *Ottoman History*, which treats this question with suitable gravity and in great detail: 'Both the white and the red felt caps were simple up to the time of Mahomet the Conqueror. . . . The felt caps are called börek; those worn by the Janissaries, with a wide band of felt hanging down at the back, are known as ketshes, and the cylindrical caps coming to a point at the top which are worn by their colonels are called uskuf. The first was introduced as a universal head-covering under Urchan by the Vizir Aladdin. Later it was confined to the army by Beglerbeg Timurtash under Bayazid I. And finally, under Mahomet II, it was diversified and ornamented in a variety of ways. The particular shape of the second originated with the blessing of the dervish Hadji Begtash.' Considering the great importance attached to headgear it is not surprising to find that the names of the different varieties were used as general terms for whole peoples and occasionally even as terms of abuse. A predecessor of the Safavids introduced red caps among his followers. From that time on for centuries the Turks called all Persians 'Kizil-bashi' (red-heads), which the Persians looked upon as an insult, but they retorted by explaining that in this case 'kizil' (red) stood for red-gold, that is to say for golden caps. (*See also PAHLEVI and SIDARA.*)

**FETVA**

means an expression of opinion, that is to say the verdict given by mufti or cadi. In the Ottoman empire common law was derived from the fetvas of the muftis; in clerically ruled Sunnite States they are irrefutable to this day.

**FIRMAN**, an edict of the Shah.

**GESIREH**

means island. The land between the Tigris and Euphrates in northern Mesopotamia has from ancient times been called Gesireh, to distinguish it from the Mesopotamian Iraq in the south.

**HADJI**

is the name given to any man, woman, or child who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca. The pilgrimage not only confers the prospect of a happy life in the Beyond, but is a title of honour in this world also. Apart from the great pilgrimage, which is immensely toilsome and often takes years to accomplish, there are also lesser pilgrimages. For the Shiites in Iran there are pilgrimages to Kerbela, Najaf, and Kazimain in Mesopotamia; the Shiites of the Arabic world may go to Qum and Meshed in Iran. Moreover nearly every town or sacred mountain has pilgrimages to the tombs of minor local saints. The whole system may be compared with the gradations of Roman Catholic pilgrimages to Vierzehnheiligen, Rome, and Jerusalem, but it plays a much greater part in the lives of Orientals. A 'Kerbelaï', a man who has made the pilgrimage to Kerbela, is looked upon in Shiite Iran as being almost as holy as a Hadji.

**HAN, KHAN, HANEH**

is the caravanserai or inn. The plan of such an establishment is practically the same in all countries, though the architecture varies greatly from wonderful black and white vaulted stone buildings in Syria to fortress-like brick hans in Iran. The buildings are centred round a courtyard in which mules, horses, donkeys and camels are harboured. On the first floor, connected by open or roofed-in balconies, are rooms for human occupation. In many cases fodder is provided for animals. The humans

bring everything they need with them. No one travels without his bed, his pillows, his cooking utensils. Spending a night in a han may prove to be a very sociable proceeding if people belonging to friendly tribes or cities meet and sit down to a joint meal round a common fire. On the other hand, it may equally well turn out to be a stratonian affair, where every one looks with suspicion on every one else and sentries are set to watch through the night. The hans in the country districts are gradually dying out, the beautiful buildings are falling to ruin, for motor-cars cover very different distances each day from those formerly covered by caravans. In the towns some of the hans, the central courts of which are generally roofed in, have been turned into hotels, and some have been replaced by hotels. No one who has seen them in going order can look upon their passing with anything but regret. In Iran there are in addition the CHAI-HANEH, tea-houses, not places in which to spend the night but merely for a short rest and refreshment. A roof jutting out over wooden pillars offers shade against the blazing heat of the open country; wide wooden benches covered with rugs are waiting to receive the visitor, the samovar is always boiling, and the red-gold liquid is served in slender little glasses upon delicately carved trays. After the interminable ranges of mountains that surround the plateau on all sides, after the acrid red-brown or yellowish-white blaze of the desert, such a tea-house seems like a little paradise—friendly repose in the shade, generally amid sweet-scented flowers; water for the radiator; a reviving drink; an exchange of courtesies in a traditionally courteous land.

#### HEJIRA, HEJRA, HIJRE

means 'departure'. The word stands for the flight of Mahomet from Mecca to Medina on 15 July 622, at which date the Islamic chronology begins.

#### HODJA or CHODJA

is a teacher, sometimes also a judge. In the Ottoman empire the Sultan's Hodja was an important functionary. He was not only the instructor of the princes but in the case of a Sultan interested in learning he was also the royal reader.

**IMAM**

is the man who says the public prayers at a mosque. The word, however, has also acquired the meaning of a temporal and spiritual ruler by divine right, the man who prays, as it were, in the name of all the faithful upon earth, that is to say a Sultan or a Caliph. The Shiites claim to have the only true Imams of Islam in the descendants of Ali.

**IRAN**

is the now officially accepted name of the country of the Iranians which until a few years ago was known in Europe as Persia. The word Persia comes from the province Fars, Persis, which is regarded as the heart of Iran. Thus the word Persia bears much the same relationship to Iran as England to Great Britain. In so far as the history of Iran is concerned the name Persia has been preserved, because the introduction of a new term like Iranian wars instead of Persian wars, which has been current for centuries, would be too confusing.

**ISLAM.**

'Aslama' means 'to submit oneself'. Abraham's sacrifice of his son is regarded as the outstanding example of submission to the will of God. The thought of it is said to have prompted Mahomet to select this name for his religion.

**JANISSARIES**

are the Jeni tsheri, that is the 'new legion'. The first Ottomans won their victories with the help of Turkoman cavalry. These were men of independent spirit, eager for pillage, useful in war, but dangerous and intractable in times of peace. When Urchan (1326-59) tried to introduce an organized administration he found his erstwhile soldiers very troublesome. Then the idea occurred to Kara Chalil Tshendereli, the head of the military tribunal, to form a company of soldiers from Christian children who had been taken prisoner. The moral pretext given for this measure was that according to the words of the Prophet every new-born child brings the germ of Islam into the world; thus both the temporal and the eternal welfare of these slave children would be promoted. The political purpose was to have a body of



soldiers without attachment to home-country or relatives, free, with the single bond of military discipline and comradeship within the regiment. In later centuries if the number of prisoners did not suffice to bring the troop up to full strength, the children of Christian subjects were recruited. The system maintained its efficiency until the principle was abandoned and the regiment recruited instead from among the children of the Janissaries themselves.

### JEBEL

means mountain in Arabic-speaking places.

### KAIMAKAM

is a title still customary, given to a district or rural councillor. In Persian-speaking countries a kaimakam was a deputy governor.

### AL-KAMIL

means 'the excellent one'. In the days of the Omayyads any 'educated' person was so called, i.e. a man who could read and write his own language, use the bow and arrows, and swim. The name Kemal, therefore, means The Excellent One, whereas the Turkish word Kamal, later adopted by Atatürk, means fortress.

### KARA

means black. It is evidently the favourite colour of the Oriental. Kara Osman, the Black Osman, is the first Osman's title of honour. The word therefore occurs in a great variety of compounds—Kara Hissar, the black castle; Kara Su, the black water (the name given to the western arm of the Euphrates); Kara Yusuf, black Joseph, Prince of the Kara Kuyunlu, the black ram. The words *ak* (white) and *kizil* (red) are much less frequently used.

### KEFFIEH

is the head-covering of the Bedouin and desert Arabs. It is exactly like that of King ibn Saud. Any one first coming to Arabian countries feels as if he were meeting a succession of ibn Sauds, not only on account of their headgear but also because the desert Arabs (as distinct from the town Arabs) all

carry themselves like princes. The keffieh is either wholly white or red and white checked, rather like a peasant handkerchief. The two thick cords made of camel hair or goat's hair with which the keffieh is kept in position, called *agal*, are normally black; but in the case of persons of high rank they may be golden.

## KHAN

means prince. The word was brought to the Near East by the Mongols. In the course of time high dignitaries and members of important families in Persia were given the title Khan, more or less corresponding to the title Pasha used in the Ottoman empire but originating in Persia. IL-KHAN was the title given to the Mongol rulers of Persia.

## KORAN

means reading aloud. The Koran is the Word of Allah written down as it was dictated to the Prophet by Gabriel. The individual *suras* (chapters) are arranged according to length. In addition to visions and religious laws they also contain stories intended to point a moral. Many of them are derived from the same sources as the Bible stories—Adam, Noah, Abraham, Lot, Joseph, Moses, Saul, David, Solomon, are often mentioned.

## MAMELUKE

means a 'bought slave', as distinct from one taken in battle. The Egyptian Caliphs and other Oriental potentates formed their lifeguards from such slaves. Several dynasties were derived from them. The first Egyptian Mameluke Sultan was a woman, Ayubid-al-Shali, an Armenian or Turkish slave who bore the Caliph a son. She reigned alone for eighty days and had coins minted with her image. The Atabeg Izz-el-Din-Azbak was given to her as husband. She bullied him until he proposed to contract another marriage. Then she had him murdered in the bath. Soon afterwards she herself was beaten to death with the wooden slippers of a slave. The famous Mameluke dynasties of Egypt were those of the Bahri (1250-1390), of Turkish-Mongolian origin, and that of the Burji (1382-1517) of Circassian origin. After Sultan Selim, the Osman, had con-

quered Egypt in 1517, Mamelukes ruled as governors until Mehemet Ali, the founder of the present Egyptian dynasty, had the last members of the family murdered.

### MIRZA

a Persian title. In front of a name it means the same as Mr. or Esquire. After a name it means Prince.

MOHAFIZ, Governor.

### MUEZZIN

is the man who announces the hours for prayer. Five times a day he climbs up to the little balcony that surrounds every minaret, and from there, standing up against the sky and audible for long distances, he calls the faithful to prayer.

### MUFTI

is one whose verdict is final in doubtful interpretations of the Law. The Cadis act upon such findings. Under Mahomet II (1451-81), for example, a mufti issued a fetva (expression of opinion) regarding the legitimacy of fratricide at the succession to the throne. As the centuries passed, the position of the mufti grew more and more powerful. He represented the supreme power of the Law. In the mandated territory of Palestine the English, as representatives of temporal but not of spiritual power, allowed the office of mufti to continue, and the mufti here became the representative of the rights (not only of the Law) of the whole Arabic Islam population.

### MUJTAHID

is a spiritual dignitary among the Shiites, that is to say in southern Iraq and in Iran. His business is to interpret religious doctrines.

### PADISHAH

really means 'the king's dwelling'. But throughout Moslem Asia it is used as a title for the ruler of a country.

### PAHLEVI

originally meant Parthian. Firstly, it is the name given to the ancient Iranian language (used in writing between 400 B.C.

and 800 A.D.). The peculiarity of Pahlevi is that what was written is quite different from what was read. For example, the King of Kings was written 'Malkan-Malka', but pronounced 'Shahin-Shah'. In the same way, the word for bread was written 'lahma' and pronounced 'nau'. This also occurs in modern languages; in English, for instance, we write 'viz.' and pronounce it 'namely'. In Iran, as in the Far East, words as such have an ideological or symbolic character, and so up to quite recent times it has been the custom of illiterate cooks to adorn their accounts with drawings—a hen, an apple, a lamb, an egg, a grain of rice. Such account books are often real little works of art. Secondly, Shah Rheza Khan, the present ruler of Iran, adopted the name Pahlevi as his surname. Thirdly, the national head-covering introduced by the Shah was called Pahlevi. It has already been abolished again in favour of the European hat, and is now reserved to members of the royal family.

#### PASHA

is Pai Shah, that is to say, the foot of the Shah. The title goes back to a very ancient Iranian custom, mentioned by Xenophon. King Cyrus called the State officials appointed by him his feet, hands, eyes, ears. The eyes were the internal administration; ears, those who provided secret intelligence; hands, those who collected taxes; feet, the soldiers; tongues, the judges. In the days of the Osmanli rule pashas wore one or two or three horses' tails according to their rank.

#### THE PORTE

is the Government, because from the earliest days the affairs of the people were settled at the gates of the king's palace. Beside the gates stood the Lifeguards, the embodiment of power. The idea is so important and so fundamental that it is used in a great variety of ways. The different branches of the Service were called Portes (gates). The Kanunname, the legal code of Mahomet II is divided into three Portes: (1) the social hierarchy; (2) ceremonial; (3) fines, misdemeanours, revenues, offices. The miscellaneous character of (3) gives an interesting light on the technique of Oriental administration.

**ROUM**

simply means Rome to the Oriental, no matter whether it refers to Rome proper or to Byzantium. In the days of the Omayyads, that is to say in the seventh and eighth centuries, Asia Minor was still considered part of Roum. In the days of the Osmans, when Byzantium had withdrawn almost entirely from Asia, Roum meant Europe in general; for Byzantium was representative of Europe. Thus, for example, Roumeli Hissar means the European palace, because it lies on the European side of the Bosphorus. In the Ottoman empire there was one military tribunal for Roum and one for Anatoli—for Asia. When battles were fought in Europe, the Roum troops took up their position on the right flank of the army; when battles were fought in Asia this position was taken by the Asiatics.

**SAYYID**

means the descendants of Mahomet through his daughter Fatima and her sons Hassan and Hussein. A Sayyid has the right to wear a green turban, whereby he may be recognized at a glance. To be the actual physical descendant of the Prophet seems to the uninitiated European something quite out of the ordinary—until he goes to a Shiite country, where he may meet several Sayyids every day. This is the result of the very large number of children in families where four legal wives and any number of concubines are allowed, and where even the children of slave-women 'count' in so far as they are acknowledged by the father.

**SERAGLIO**

originally meant the palace of the ruler. Since governmental affairs were carried on here, the name came to be gradually transferred to the government buildings. Nowadays every town of any size has a seraglio—roughly corresponding with our town hall.

**SHARIAH OR SHERI**

is the Islamic canonical code of law that embraces all departments of human life, religious, social, and political.

**SHATT** is the Arabic for river.

### **SHEIKH**

originally (and in Arabian countries still) means the head of a tribe. He is chosen for his abilities and his age. He must confer with the tribal council (consisting of the heads of families) upon important legal and military questions. He may be deposed. In the thirteenth century the Persian mystical brotherhood of the Sofi called the members of the order Sheikh in imitation of the Syrian monastic system. In the Ottoman empire, sheikh meant simply any holy man or preacher.

### **SHEREEF**

the 'noble'—a title given in western and central Arabia to the Sayyids, the descendants of the Prophet. The Shercef of Mecca is the supreme custodian of the sanctuary of the Ka'aba. In the Ottoman empire **EMIR** was an honorary title given to the Sayyids.

### **SHII**

generally called Shiites, are the 'deserters' from the true faith, as distinct from the **SUNNI**, Sunnites, who carry on the tradition of Islam. A section will be found devoted to this subject.

### **SIDARA**

is a high black felt hat with a deep dent down the middle that King Feisal introduced into Iraq as the national headgear.

### **SOFI**

originally meant a man who wore a garment made of *sof* wool, that is to say a monk's cassock. The Sofi were a mystical monastic sect originating in Persia. They exercised considerable influence upon the course of politics, especially during the wars between Turks and Persians. Owing to the fact that the first member of the famous Persian dynasty of Safavids was the son of a Sofi Sheikh, the Safavids, i.e. the descendants of the Safi family, were often also called Sofi; and in Europe, more especially in England, the word Sofi or **SOPHY** was used as alternative to Shah. In Turkish Sofi means a 'contemplative wise man', or

philosopher (no doubt derived from the Greek) and was, for example, given to the Sultan Bayazid II as a surname.

## SU

means water. In the Near East rain, floods, and rivers are called simply Su, water. In Turkey rivers are also sometimes called CHAI, that is, tea.

## TÜRBE

means a tombstone in Turkish. It often becomes a holy place.

## ULEMA

are those learned in the law. They teach theology and law and occupy the positions of teachers and judges. They do not really belong to the priestly caste but to the teachers' caste. Advancement is strictly within the hierarchy. The highest position is that of the Mufti.

## VALI

is the Turkish Governor-General of a VILAYET who exercises all the functions of government with the exception of legal and military affairs. The post has been retained in Kemalist Turkey.

## VIZIR

means the 'bearer of burdens' (because the burden of the State rests upon him), the 'three-tailed pasha', the highest dignitary in the land. It is a Persian institution that was introduced into Arabic countries by the Abbassids in the eighth century and then taken over by the Turks. When it became impossible for a single vizir to manage all the affairs of State himself the office of Grand Vizir was created. The ten prerogatives of the Grand Vizir give some idea of the ceremonial and organization of the Ottoman State:

(1) Keeping the imperial seal with which the doors of the Treasury and the Cabinet were sealed on days when a divan was held.

(2) The right to hold a divan himself, in the afternoons in his own palace, which was called the Sublime Porte.

(3) To be accompanied by the Lord Chamberlain and all

the Chaushe (State couriers) from his palace to the seraglio and back again, and on Fridays in the procession to the mosque.

(4) The attendance of the Kadiaskers (military judges) and Defterdars every Wednesday in the same State turbans in which they went to Court.

(5) The presence of the Lords of the Imperial Stirrup at the divan every Monday.

(6) The solemn procession to prayer in the mosque on Fridays accompanied by the Chaushes, the Chasnecgirs (Lord High Stewards) and the Mutaferrika (Court couriers) in their caps of State.

(7) The weekly attendance of the Aga (Commander) of the Janissaries, who waited upon other vizirs about once a month.

(8) Going the round of the city and the market-places accompanied by the Judge of Constantinople, the Aga of the Janissaries, the inspector of the market and the governor of the town.

(9) The weekly attendance of legal dignitaries and Sanjak Begs in their State turbans and robes, who only seldom waited on other vizirs and then in their ordinary clothes.

(10) Receiving formal felicitations on the two feasts of Bairam from the other vizirs, defterdars, begs, legal dignitaries, and generals of the army. (After Hammer-Purgstall, *History of the Ottoman Empire*.)

It may be added that if the Sultan was very temperamental the office of Grand Vizir was, despite all these ceremonial dignities, neither enjoyable nor of long duration. So the curse was evolved: 'May you become Sultan Selim's vizir!', which is further elucidated by the historian Aali: 'Because Sultan Selim's vizirs often hardly occupied their posts for a month without being delivered over to the executioner, all vizirs appointed at this time were in the habit of carrying their Wills with them in their bosoms; and each time they came from an audience with their heads still upon their shoulders they felt themselves to have been reborn.'

## WADI, OUED

means river throughout Arabic territory. Depressions in the desert that have been dried up for a thousand years or more are still called wadi.



**WAKF**, also **EVKA** (plural **VAKIF**)

is a pious institution according to Moslem law. Such foundations are looked after by a special office (now a Ministry). They may concern a mosque, in connection with which some business has been established from the profits of which the mosque shall be kept up in perpetuity. Or a school, or a charity kitchen. The Hejaz Railway that was to have run to Mecca but has never been finished is a Wakf. Or again a Wakf may be established for minors, for idiots, for spendthrift members of a family; that is to say the money will be administered by executors for the benefit of the persons in question. Wakf property is inviolable and represents a serious problem to modern States which deal with this 'mortmain' property more or less high-handedly according to their attitude to Islam. In Egypt, for example, every new road that is cut causes the greatest difficulties because somewhere or other along the route there is sure to be a Wakf that must not be meddled with. The Turkish Republic has secularized the Wakf administration and put it under the Home Office, but acts most cautiously in the process of dispossession and only with the concurrence of a committee of clerics which assists in the administration. It is also making efforts to hand over the preservation and repairing of religious edifices that are of artistic or historic interest to the Wakf administration. Any State official in the Near East who is asked about the constitution of the Wakf throws up his hands and casts despairing looks at the ceiling and says: 'Don't ask me about it. It is so complicated that no one understands it and no one will ever succeed in disentangling it.'

#### **ZAPTIEH**

is a policeman. In pre-War days every European traveller in the Ottoman empire was given a zaptich as escort. In present-day Turkey every traveller must report to the police station in any large city. The rural constabulary are called **KARAKOL**, which means 'black hole', but there are no signs of horrible dungeons, and these country policemen are delightfully helpful to any foreigner who gets into difficulties.

## I

### THE CONQUERORS

*Nations like individuals fashion their own destinies, good or bad, for they are their own prophets. . . . It is not what is predicted by friend or foe but what a man predicts for himself in a mood of courage or cowardice that is effectuated in victory or defeat.*

[HAMMER-PURGSTALL]

To a European who has several centuries' experience of national States behind him, the most outstanding feature to-day in Near Eastern national States is that in all of them the relics of a common past are evident—a past that is not far distant and to a considerable extent is still living. The land included between the Black Sea and the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea and the Oxus, was once a single great unity. At one time this unity was subject to the Persians, then to the Greeks, at another time it was overrun by Islamic Arabs from western Arabia, and again by Mongols from the east. It fought and endured as a whole, even when the yeasty mass threw up two major antagonists—Turks and Iranians—who held the balance between them. The very vastness of the area, the extent of its mountain ranges, the desolation of its deserts, the chaotic mixture of races, made possible a series of distinct evolutions that would have disintegrated a more circumscribed political body like a national State. Many things that were essentially incompatible lived together under the common roof of Islam, under the sometimes despotic, sometimes indifferent, dominion of the Caliphs, and the ups and downs of Iranian dynasties. Kurds and Armenians were neighbours, loathing one another. Assyrians and Maronites continued each to live their lives as they had done in the first centuries after the birth of Christ. Mystical doctrines swayed thousands, religious parties spurred on their adherents to war, Tartar sections of the population were incited to revolt against their

sovereign rulers by warlike invading Tartar tribes. What remains of all these separate destinies has never been eradicated and has never died out. They still exist—followers of Zoroaster and devil-worshippers; Nestorians as well as Jacobites and Melkhites; Kurds and Armenians. They all exist, but nowadays they are no longer a collection of fragments constituting two ill-organized empires, but are divided into eight or nine national States. As such, they weigh disproportionately heavy and have become a problem. To understand this problem aright it is necessary to know where they all came from, in what manner they adapted themselves to local conditions, why they split up and fought one another, and what they made of the mighty onslaught of the last European invasion, the invasion of applied technical knowledge, of imperialism, of the World War.

### THE ELEMENTS IN THE EAST

Any one whose knowledge of the East is derived from descriptions is bound to have a totally wrong impression of it. For he will take familiar words and concepts like sun, water, town, garden, hill, at their face value, whereas they mean something quite different in the East from what they do in Europe. Even the elements, which might be expected to remain constant, undergo a change of character; and everything created by man is conditioned by the elements.

A town, for instance, should surely mean the same thing all over the world except for diversities of planning and architecture. But no. In Asia Minor a town is not a sea of houses, but a green patch amid a plain of yellowy-grey sand, amid arid, desolate, red and gold hills. To approach a town means to approach a bright green coppice, in which hardly a house is visible from any distance. As a rule the coppice—the town—is a grove of poplars interspersed with willows, with maples, or elms, and sometimes with walnut, pear and apple trees. Ispahan in Persia is such a coppice, and so are Damascus in Syria and Erzin in Turkey. The poplars are not the slender yet compact poplars that may be seen in the Napoleonic avenues in southern Germany and in France. Nor are they the great spreading poplars that stand as definite individualities in the midst of our

fields and meadows. The Eastern poplars are light and transparent—pale silvery stems with sparse green clusters of leaves pressed close to the trunk. They grow near together, a splash of tender green against the brilliant sky. There are towns that are like a close succession of small farms and vegetable gardens. A town of this kind containing five thousand inhabitants will take up almost as much room as any large European city. In other towns the greenery is concentrated round the edges, and in the middle the town will consist not of trees but of walls. Nevertheless even here there will hardly be a house without its garden, without its fresh green tree in the courtyard. It was something like that in Europe during the Middle Ages, when whole peasant estates or farms were to be found in the middle of fortified towns. But the reason for this practice in Europe was the fear of attack. Walls had to be built to protect the fruits of the fields against robbers. In the Near East trees and gardens and fields are where the towns are, because towns are built where there is water. There is no water anywhere else. That is the decisive factor. The size of a town in Persia depends upon the height of the mountains from whence comes its water-supply, in other words upon the size of the irrigated area. Hence it is not correct to look upon southern Italian or Spanish towns as Oriental. In Italy and in large parts of northern Africa nature is what remains outside the towns, while the northerner tries to bring rural elements into his towns. In the Near East, on the other hand, towns or villages, that is to say places where men can live all the year round, only exist where 'nature' flourishes, where water and green things exist. Water and growing plants are symbols of the joys of paradise to eastern man. This distinction also produces a sociological difference. In Italy even the peasant is *civis*, that is to say a citizen, a townsman. His occupation is to till the soil, but in his mental outlook he is not of the country but of the town. In northern Europe the aim of the townsman is chiefly to find some link with the soil, to satisfy his longing for the open country. The distinction between town and country is recognized and deplored in our part of the world but we can hardly imagine the unbridgeable gulf that has yawned between them in Asia for centuries.

It is not true to say that men only live in the few green patches

that have grown into towns and in the stretches of country that are naturally fertile. The rest of the country seems empty—and is empty according to our ideas. But it is not quite as empty as the Libyan desert where, year in, year out, never a blade of grass will grow, where two hundred and fifty or three hundred miles lie between one water-hole and another, where there are vast tracts through which never a man has been, either riding or afoot. In the Asiatic deserts, except in places where they are very salt, a tough sort of steppe grass grows at intervals. And wherever the least green thing appears will be found men and their flocks—nomads. They do not simply roam about at will, as the town dweller may with feelings of vague envy suppose. According to old custom they have their summer and their winter quarters. These are governed by definite regulations exactly as they were at the time when the Seljuks assigned to the little minor tribe of Osmanli nomads their summer and winter quarters in the neighbourhood of Angora. If the tribes cannot agree about boundary and grazing rights, or if they are forced to move to other parts during years of special drought, then battle and sudden death occur to-day as of yore. And if European mandatory States draw frontiers in straight lines across ancient inherited prerogatives there will be continual incidents and infringements of frontiers that cannot be rectified by means of diplomatic Notes.

In the spring when the wilderness 'blossoms', the nomads go far away into the desert with their sheep and goats, their camels, and their asses. But as the sun mounts higher in the heavens, and the heat and drought increase, they come nearer and nearer to the cultivated parts. They set up their camps on the edge of the verdure that toiling men have induced the land to bring forth. The towns and villages find them uncomfortable neighbours, especially at times when there is no strong Government to safeguard property.

In winter the mountain nomads go down into the valleys where the cold is not quite as intense as it is at heights of six thousand and more feet, and where they can find some shelter from the winds. In the spring they go steadily uphill again, over boggy clay passes, over steep masses of boulders, and often through deep snow. By this time there are young lambs to be

looked after. Sometimes they and the small children cannot keep up, and then they have to be tied on to the back of a donkey all among the cooking pots and the pillows or they are set on a man's shoulder or on a woman's back. This move into the hills means great hardship for young mothers, as well as for old women, and the men who pursue and drive back straying beasts and who have to keep the whole caravan in order; it means hardship for all these people, who wear rags bound round their feet for shoes, whose feet are often bleeding and covered with running sores. It is their life. They know no other. And now that many of them are being forced into another mode of living, and possibly a more comfortable one, they are resigned indeed but not happy. They have lost the one privilege of nomadism—an incalculable privilege in a land where for thousands of years the money that the State, its rulers and its officials believe themselves to require has been squeezed out of peasants and craftsmen—the privilege of being elusive and therefore difficult if not impossible to tax.

What we call 'country' as distinct from town does not exist in the Near East. The soil is different from what it is in Europe. It is no friend of man, no giver of strength. It is alien and indifferent. One feels that it is still exactly as it was in the first days of the Creation—untouched. Human beings were set on it by a distant and incomprehensible God. They never feel quite secure, quite at ease, in the country. Earthquakes rend the ground beneath their feet, the mountains send down immense volumes of water to flood the plains, the earth dries up again under the rays of the sun, famine brings thousands to their death. Men feel no impulse to get into the open, they have no sense of nearness, of kinship, with the soil; no feeling of wanting to be a part with it, of the unity of all things, of Goethe's 'thy flowers, thy grass pulse against my heart'. The youthful Aladdin, before he possessed the magic lamp, having been enticed outside his native town by his supposed uncle, the Moroccan, farther than he had ever been, said to the Mahrabi: 'O my uncle, whither do we go? We have left behind us the gardens, and we have come to a barren rolling waste. If the way is still far, I shall have no strength to continue. . . . No gardens lie

before us. Let us therefore return and go back to the town.' Such an attitude of mind is not a peculiarity of Oriental man but of the Oriental soil. The Oriental earth is either a dry desert, burning hot, dazzling, hostile, or great boulders piled into mountains, or a steppe, hard as rock. Or else, where there is water and green things will grow, it is damp, crossed by little channels and rivulets, in a state of permanent, carefully regulated artificial flooding. Pierre Loti wrote of the desert: 'It is boundless solitude, it is the great undisputed triumph of death . . . a man is there as in a world that has come to an end, a world that has been devastated by fire, to which no dew will ever again bring life.' At the time of the winter rains the desert may become swampy, a sea of tenacious mud from whence there is no escape. It may under the unbridled force of the winds rise up into the air. Sandhills will begin to move. For days and weeks, and in southern Iran actually for months, at a time, sandstorms may obscure the light and make life a misery. Then again, especially in parts where there are hills and mountains, the desert may be of an entrancing loveliness—its colours ranging from ochre yellow through purple down to deepest violet or a tender rose; its shapes, sometimes gently rolling, sometimes abrupt and sheer; and all under the clear dry light of the southern skies.

The mounds and hills of the Anatolian and Iranian plateau merge at its edges into high mountains—the snow-clad Demawend in the Elbruz range that forms the boundary between the arid highlands of the interior of Iran and the damp heat of the narrow strip of country along the shores of the Caspian; Mount Ararat on the frontier between Turkey, Iran, and Russia, the slopes of which were so terrible that Sultan Selim's Janissaries refused to advance; the Kazan Kaya range that forms the boundary towards the Black Sea; the Asiatic Olympus, whose many white peaks may on clear days be seen from Europe shining in the sunlight; the sacred mountain Erjas Dag with its symmetrical, snow-covered volcanic cones, standing alone in the plateau of Kayseri, visible for fifty miles; the Cilician Taurus that has always divided the people of Asia Minor from those of Syria; Mount Lebanon and all the other Syrian mountains that have made ideal hiding-places for refractory sectarians and rebellious tribes; the fertile hills of Zagros that form the boun-

dary between the Arabian plains and the Iranian highlands; and the dreaded mountain passes known as the 'Daughter' and the 'Old Woman', between the coastal stretches along the Persian Gulf and the highlands, that at the same time form the frontier between seafaring Iranians and Arabs and the main mass of the land-bound Iranian people.

Even more impressive and memorable than the famous mountains are the many nameless hills that confront the traveller. In Iran they are generally of an acrid golden brown or red-gold colour. In Syria they are grey and black showing bright reddish-yellow where the rock breaks. In Asia Minor there are great magnificent sweeps of red, whitish, sulphur-yellow and green mountains—not green with living growth, but a mineral green with oxidized specks of copper. Curiously shaped are these hills—sometimes they look like petrified streams of lava, sometimes they are inclined in many-coloured layers one over another, then again in horizontal strata as far as the eye can see. Sometimes a mountain looks as if it had been thrown out of its original position by some later convulsion of the earth—lying on its side, almost standing on its head; resigned to its fate, like everything else in these regions. The hills, colourful as they may appear, fantastic as their shapes are, are nevertheless quite bare; an occasional stunted bush may be found, and in the hollows sparse steppe grass will grow. It is as though the creation of the world could be seen in these mountains, they are so naked, so primeval. Some parts are more inhuman than others, they are hostile in their lack of colour, they are crumbling and unreliable beneath the foot of any one who walks on them, dead and yellowy-white like a lunar landscape. It is amid such prospects that oil is very often found.

The life-giving element in this bare scene is water. It cannot be sufficiently emphasized how rare and precious water is. A Mesopotamian chauffeur exclaimed with delight on a drive to Iran that the most wonderful thing in Persia was the amount of water to be found there. 'Every hour', he said, 'you find more water'—every hour, that is to say, reckoned by the speed of driving a car. 'And each water has a different taste.' It is interesting to note that the flavour of water is savoured as in



Europe that of very special wines. The water connoisseurs of Constantinople can distinguish the waters of their various springs in just the same way as a connoisseur of wines can tell one vintage port from another.

The tenant or landowner pays heavy dues for the water that is brought to his land by artificial means. Owners of gardens in Teheran are given their allotment of water once a week. First there is a small flood, then the rest of the water is collected in great stone basins. Towards the end of the week it sinks lower and lower until sometimes it runs completely dry.

The possession of water is not everywhere uncontested—our words 'rival' and 'rivalry' are derived from the Latin word 'rivus', meaning a river. Injustice and quarrels occur more especially in places where war has led to the redrawing of boundaries; where those who live higher up try to retain the major part of a stream for their own use. After the Russians had conquered the Turkomans in 1881 and had thereby become neighbours of Iran to the east of the Caspian, the district fertilized by the River Atrek was as a matter of course occupied by the victorious Power. But in addition to that the Russians prohibited the Persian villagers from increasing by so much as one square yard such of their land that was irrigated, or to plant a single new tree. And as long as Russia was powerful Russian officials took it upon themselves to cross over into Persian territory whenever they felt so disposed and to punish infringements of these orders by destroying crops. Something of the same sort has happened within our own time in the part where the Mesopotamian desert of Iraq merges into the highlands of Iran. The flourishing garden-city of Mendeli where grew the best date-palms in all Iraq was stricken by the extension of market gardening on the Persian side. Orange trees had to be cut down, palm groves grew dry and yellow, the date crop sank to a quarter of what it had been, and the people of Mendeli had more time than ever before to sit on the long wooden benches in their cafés, smoking their water-pipes, while the mountain water that is a necessity of life to them was diverted on the other side of the frontier.

So towns will die slowly for lack of water; and after a while nothing will be left save ruined houses and a few shepherds.

The sand will drift in, and at last only a few low mounds will be left to show that here was once a city. During the above-mentioned drive to Iran in 1938 the Iraqi chauffeur inspected with the liveliest interest the newly established irrigation works and gardens at Qasr Shirin. For Qasr Shirin lies on the Iranian side on the banks of the River Dyala, and such water as remains in Qasr Shirin to produce fruitfulness there will not come down to the Iraq frontier town of Khanikin, whereby Khanikin will be so much the poorer in vegetation. Peoples will hate one another for the sake of water, even while their Governments are exchanging assurances of friendship from political motives.

The hostility of the elements is shown far more clearly and unmistakably in the East than in Europe. Water is the giver of life, and at the same time the destroyer. It comes from above, from the sky or from the mountains, in vast masses, relentlessly. In the spring, the traveller is faced with swollen torrents, he steers his car carefully past gaping holes in the bridges, or seeks to ford the swift waters, guided by a friendly horseman. Or else in the summer-time in places where roads have been properly built he will stand in amazement before immensely long bridges, bridges as long and longer than those across the Thames, the stone spans of which lead only across dry stony deserts. Every economically minded Government official must be irritated by these huge bridges, because they are only needed during a few weeks in the year while the rivers are in spate, and for months at a time they span dry rubble apparently uselessly. Even these well-built stone bridges are not strong enough to hold out against the water for long. Every year cracks appear; every year they have to be repaired, otherwise within a short time they will join the great army of Oriental structures that are half in ruins and half in use, and show man's fatalistic resignation to the divine elements.

The Tigris and the Euphrates, the sources of which are in the wild mountains of the north, rush so torrentially down to the valleys that many an unwary boatman and swimmer has been swept to his death in them. The force of these two rivers has given its character to the flat country of Mesopotamia—'the land between the rivers'. They caused the Flood, the story of

which occurs in the Gilgames epic as well as in the Bible. According to the Sumerian legend, Ziudsuddu, the priest-king of a Sumerian city, was warned by God on account of his great piety that a flood was about to occur. He therefore built himself a gufa, a boat like those that may be seen on the Tigris to this day. They are completely circular, formed of interlaced palm branches and covered with pitch. They are steered by means of rough wooden paddles, and float down the river looking like particularly large thick lorry tyres. Ziudsuddu packed his animals on board a vessel of this description, and in it survived the rainstorms that lasted for seven days and seven nights. His boat was swept along by the floods, but at length the sun came out again. Ziudsuddu sacrificed a sheep and an ox and was saved. Unlike his counterpart Noah, who is said to have sailed in the Ark to the heights of Mount Ararat, Ziudsuddu evidently did not land on a mountain but upon a flat spot. This is much more probable, considering the vastness of these plains. The European can hardly imagine so much flatness. The level desert land merges straight into the sky in every direction, just like the sea; and when the sun rises it seems to be lying in a flat background. Never a tree, never a bush, breaks the straight line between it and a man looking eastwards. In such a plain, water must spread and spread, just as in a bathroom quite a small quantity of water suffices to cover the whole floor.

Sir Leonard Woolley, the archaeologist, was the first to prove the truth of the story of the Flood when he was excavating at Ur. The proof is embodied in a layer of clay separating two similar cultural strata from one another. Meanwhile other Flood strata have been discovered in other spots where excavation has taken place. They are of periods other than that at Ur. Thus every archaeologist may have his own private Flood, and each one is at liberty to believe his to be the genuine one.

One thing, however, is curious about the floods and spates of Mesopotamia to this day—they are so numerous and yet every time they evidently come as a complete surprise. A driver on the desert transport line between Damascus and Baghdad declares that the floods of 1938 were the worst for years. The road to Ramadi was destroyed, Lake Habbanieh overflowed its banks. It will take months to make the road passable again after the

water has subsided. Nevertheless, a glance through a file of *The Times* will show that there are continually recurrent 'worst' floods. One time it will be the Tigris, the next the Euphrates. Stagnant pools form and breed malaria. The letters of Gertrude Bell show the same—great floods, great excitement; danger of dams bursting; what steps can be taken to help the unfortunate victims?

Not until a trip has been taken through southern Mesopotamia is it possible to realize what a great flood really is like. The desert is as flat as a board. Nowhere does it slope upwards or rise into mounds upon which men might save themselves. The people of Baghdad tell of a particularly devastating flood that occurred at the beginning of the nineteen-twenties. Flat Tigris barges were propelled over the waters to rescue people who had taken refuge on the roofs of their houses and upon small artificially raised mounds. If no boat happened to pass at the right moment, if the waters rose higher, if the clay hut dissolved into mud, there was only one end to the story—the people were drowned. A year after this flood an Englishman passed through the desert and saw from afar a huge black object upon a ridge of sand. It was one of the Tigris boats. It had run aground on a sandbank while engaged upon the work of rescue. Few ships ever manage to be as 'high and dry' as this one was. The Arabs were trying to dig a channel to the river a mile and a half away to set the ship afloat again. There are stories of lorries that got stuck and of which nothing but the roof was visible above the water on the next day. Small vehicles like Fords and Chevrolets are apt to vanish without leaving a trace upon such occasions.

The Hindiyeht dam across the Euphrates is a solid piece of work of European engineering craft, pre-War, a dam and a railway bridge combined. But by now it is so worn by the perpetual onslaught of the torrential waters of the Euphrates that it is no longer safe for railway trains, and passengers to Kerbela are obliged to cross the Euphrates on foot carrying their baggage. In the little modern settlement of Ctesiphon, close by the immense crumbling arches of the Sassanian palace, the men of the place sit peacefully on a long bench in the mornings and meditate. Children in delightful gaily coloured garments hide behind the skirts of the black-veiled women who

stand about the market-place. Do these people ever remember that only fifty years ago the Tigris took quite a different bend at Ctesiphon than it does to-day, and that it now cuts through the ruins of the town that it once surrounded?

Thus the river—Tigris or Euphrates—may sometimes decide to make a new bed for itself after a flood. Then the towns that it has until then irrigated will die and new ones will grow up in another place. And all modern engineering skill, all the dams and barrages, will be useless if the waters once again decide to take a new route.

The sun. Is any one capable of describing the Mesopotamian sun, the sun in the Persian Gulf, the sun as it shines upon the Turkish plateau in summer? It is so all-pervasive, so inescapable. There is no shade save where man has put up an artificial screen against it. Everything is dazzling; the light is reflected and doubled in a shadowless world. It is impossible to believe when one is faced by this tormenting brilliance that in Europe thousands of people voluntarily expose their bodies to the sun on beaches, on playing fields, in open motors. The heat, especially in Iraq and southern Persia is so great that everything, wood, glass, metal, cushions, books, everything in fact, is hotter than a man's hand. This occurs as soon as the thermometer rises above ninety-eight degrees, above blood-heat. In summer it does actually rise to between one hundred and twenty and one hundred and thirty degrees. Moreover on the Persian Gulf and on the Caspian Sea the air is damp, everything is sticky, the sky is white with mist, the sun a malevolent white disk.

As drought induces a longing for water and green things, so the ubiquitous radiance of the sun breeds a longing for darkness. Life begins with the approach of night in the East. It is cooling, soothing, reviving. There is nothing more beautiful than the close of day, the tender greenish-gold glow in the sky after sunset, the blue-black darkness, the sensation of floating, of lightness, of relaxation. The feeling recurs afresh every evening, for the sun has blazed and dazzled afresh every day. Since night and day are of equal importance in the twenty-four hours, the night sky is an open book. The phases of the moon are as familiar as the sequence of the days of the week.

The longing for darkness, the love of night, are perhaps the reason that black is reckoned the most beautiful colour. The black wrap in which a woman swathes herself is perhaps not as anti-feminist as people are apt to think. It clothes a woman with the mystery of night during the daytime, in the street, before the world, and the only visible thing about her is dark as the night—her eyes.

Water and verdure and darkness are the essence of beauty, of refreshment, of loveliness, and with them that which grows from water and verdure in the shade of the trees—flowers and their scent. In Turkey youths may be seen carrying bunches of flowers in their hands—not for sale to tourists, for tourists hardly exist in that sense—but for their own pleasure; mature men, mayors, police officers, chemists, will run garlands of deliciously scented orange blossom through their fingers. In Baghdad and Basra an employee will bring 'muski' blossom to his master's office—the sweet-smelling white jasmine. And, just as it is the custom to offer visitors tea or coffee, so the man at the desk or the man in the bazaar will give any one who comes to see him on business a sweet-scented white blossom as a mark of particular friendship. In Iran it is said that a beggar who has collected a few coins will rest beside a pot of carnations or a rose-bush and have his glass of tea brought to him there. It is his highest pleasure.

What has been described in general terms in the preceding pages is true with local modifications throughout a large part of the Near East but not everywhere to quite the same degree. Beside bare, lonely expanses, beside great stretches of infertile land, there are closely populated regions of intensive cultivation. Formerly they were more extensive than they are now. The felling of forests has made the atmosphere drier and the process of desiccation is proceeding more and more rapidly. The fertile districts mostly lie on the edges—on the edges of hills and of seas; in Asia Minor along the Black Sea, the Sea of Marmara, and the Mediterranean; in Iran along the Caspian, in mountain valleys, and at the head of the Persian Gulf; in Syria on the sea and in mountain valleys; in Mesopotamia along the two rivers. The fertile regions along the sea-coasts, with their damp heat, that give two and three and up to five harvests a year, are nearly

always hotbeds of disease. Malaria and fruitfulness go together. The inhabitants are of a different type, less straightforward and reserved, quick, curious, often avaricious. A difference still exists between highland and lowland—in the former are Indo-Germanic races, Mongols, Turkomans, and in the latter Semites; in the former towns amid groves of poplars, in the latter towns surrounded by palm-trees; in the former a harsh climate, in the latter a soft one, producing a corresponding softness of living.

Nevertheless, despite differences, there is a curious homogeneity over all. Islam reigns from the Black Sea to the Persian Gulf, from the Red Sea to the Caspian and beyond. Turkish is spoken in northern Iran and among the ruling families of Iraq and Syria. Persian is diffused wherever there are Shiites. And the classical Arabic of the Koran holds good wherever Moslems answer the call to prayer. A European must be singularly devoid of sentiment if he is not gripped by the spirit of this land and its spaces, by the incomprehensible dispensations of Fate and by the people's resignation to their condition of dependence.

### THE FIRST COMERS

Who were the first inhabitants of the Near East and whence they came is still a matter of conjecture amongst historians. One thing, however, is certain. The first civilizations arose in river valleys where conditions of life were favourable, where the fertility of the alluvial mud made it easy for men to grow crops. One river valley, that of the Nile, just touches the outskirts of this history. The Egyptians, it is true, invaded the countries with which this book is concerned, and the Assyrians, as later the Turks, retaliated by conquering their African neighbours. But these were invasions to and from the outside, like those to and from Europe, and those to and from central and eastern Asia.

The particular river valley with which we are concerned is the delta of rivers at the head of the Persian Gulf. Eight thousand years ago, even five or three thousand years ago, at times of which we have historical records, the relative aspects of land and sea were quite different from what they are now. To-day three rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates which come down from the mountains in the north, and the Karun from the

Iranian mountains in the east, run into one and form a single wide course called the Shatt-el-Arab. In olden times each of these rivers had its own outlet into the sea, within a wide marshy delta. The sea went much farther north, so far that in old Babylonian stories the Persian Gulf is called the Sea of Sunrise. It lay to the east. To-day it is south-east of Babylon. In very early times, too, a river called the Wadi-el-Batin came in from the west, from the heart of Arabia, bringing down alluvial mud. To-day it is a stretch of arid desert.



THE PERSIAN GULF

Between these rivers and the salt marshy lakes that were left over by the sea, mud collected. At first this was soft and boggy, but gradually it settled and became firmer and drier.

... isolated settlers ventured into the drying marsh, put up their reed huts on natural islands or raised them on just such platforms of reeds and mud as are described in the Babylonian Epic of



Creation, according to which Marduk kneaded clay and spread it over a mat made of rushes which he laid on the face of the waters, and began to cultivate their little patch of ground, trenching it for drainage or digging channels for its more regular irrigation. On the wider stretches of land, and especially along the river's banks where the soil was richest, villages would grow up, and with their growth would come in corporate effort leading to the construction of more important canals and to something like the scientific control of the river.<sup>1</sup>

Since for a long time these isolated settlements were separated from one another by infertile stretches of marshland, small colonies grew up in many places. As the marshland dried up the various communities came into conflict with one another. Hence, according to Woolley, arose wars and towns.

. . . all were afflicted with land-hunger, the soil naturally fertile was limited and the reclamation of the no-man's-land would lead to quarrels between neighbours; canals dug to water a wider area might pass by or across the territory of another village which could tap its waters for the benefit of their own lands; cattle-lifting was easier and quicker than cattle-breeding; disputes over land, water, and flocks must have been common and forced men to band themselves together for protection against enemies around them. Experience had taught that buildings made of mud or sun-dried brick had to be raised above water-level, on an artificial platform, if needs be, and that an earthen rampart was the best thing to keep out the recurrent floods; common sense remarked that a rampart more sheerly built would keep out an enemy also, and so the village developed into a walled town.<sup>2</sup>

The people who inhabited these city States were of different kinds. A little to the north, where the Rivers Tigris and Euphrates approach one another very nearly, were Semites. Their capital was Aggde, and their country was known as Akkad. In the southern delta district lived the Sumerians. Their most important cities were Ur, Eridu, Larash, Uruk, Warka, Kish. Originally they came from some mountainous part, for their earliest structures show a tradition of wooden building, and timber is not found in alluvial land. They were called 'Black heads', and in physical structure were of the Indo-European type. Sir Arthur Keith, it is true, says:

<sup>1</sup> Sir Charles L. Woolley: *The Sumerians*, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 17.

The Mesopotamian peoples, both past and present, represent a transition between Iranian and Semitic types, but they have retained more of the Iranian than of the Semite.<sup>1</sup>

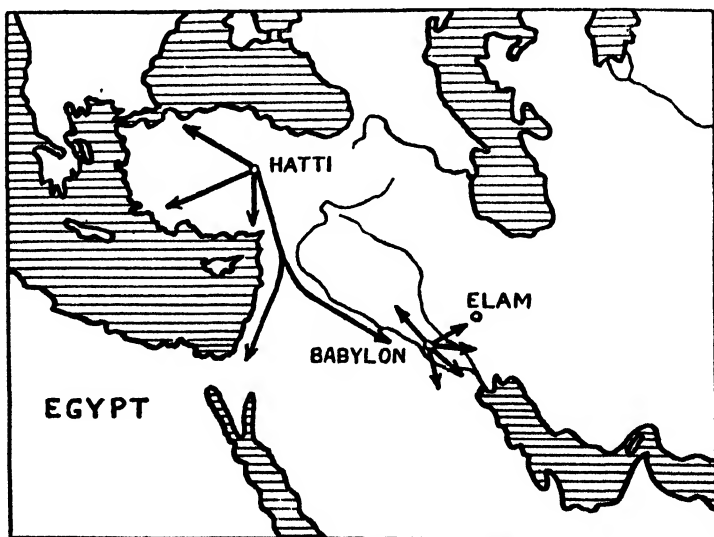
This 'transition' is easily explainable. In the west, in Arabia proper, were already living the ancestors of the modern Bedouin, virile, warlike Semitic tribes. They invaded the rich lowlands for purposes of plunder, though many of them eventually settled there. In the east was another rude and warlike nation from the land of Elam. Elam means mountain and the Elamites were a mountain people. Somewhere not far from the Gulf they possessed a piece of the most fruitful lowland which, thanks to the mud brought down by the rivers Kerkha and Karun, expanded as the centuries went on, until it was no longer separated from the delta country of the others by sea and salt lakes but only by the Shatt-el-Arab. The Elamites, the capital of whose country was Susa, not only had their own language—at least during the times when they were independent—but even a form of picture-writing of their own, which has not yet been fully deciphered. They as well as the Arabic nomads brought fresh blood into the land of the Sumerians.

There were, of course, wars between these different peoples. At one time the Sumerians were in the ascendant, then the fierce mountaineers, the Elamites, fell upon them, and at another time the Akkadians were uppermost. At times a real empire would come into being like that of King Sargon of Akkad (2800 B.C.), who sent out his ships as far as the island of Bahrein in the Persian Gulf and who possibly also ruled over the more northern country that was later called Assyria. At another time, an altogether unknown people came down from the mountains to the north of Elam. They were called Guti and they ruled over the whole territory right down to the Gulf. Round about the year 2450 B.C. Ur once more had dominion over Sumer and Akkad. And since the people of Ur made the most beautiful objects, gold vases and inlaid harps, and wonderful jewellery, and because they built a Ziggurat—an artificial hill of splendid proportions, crowned with a tower that was both fortress and temple—therefore it is very pleasing to know that they were masters in the land.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Arthur Keith: *Al-'Ubaid*, p. 216.

About the year 2200 the power was transferred to Babylon, the royal city that lay in the middle of the territory of Sumer and Akkad, the city where administration was first centralized. Hammurabi, King of Babylon, was the first great law-giver among Semites, many centuries before the days of Moses.

Up to this date the history of the Land of the Two Rivers and of the Near East was very simple. Several nations of similar cultural development lived side by side, peacefully trading with one another and sometimes at war with one another. Now came intrusions by 'outsiders', barbarians from the wild countries in the north and north-east. The Bible tells of a battle of four kings against five—the kings of Sodom, Gomorrha, of Adma, Tseboim, and Belah, against Khedor-Lahomer, King of Elam, and against Tidhal, King of the 'Nations', and against Amraphel, King of Shinar, and against Ariah, King of Ellasar. The five are of no particular interest for our purpose, they were only local notabilities. But the four are to some extent familiar already. The Elamite is obvious; Shinar is the alluvial land round the Persian Gulf, and Amraphel, therefore, is King of Babylon. Ellasar is the Sumerian town Larsa. And the 'Nations' are the Goyyim, the fierce barbarians from the north. Archaeologists believe—or at any rate some of them, for they



BABYLONIANS, ELAMITES, HITTITES

disagree on principle—that King Tidhal was the king of Hatti.

This brings us to a completely new people—the Hittites. For a long time they were no more than a name that occurred in the Bible. Whether they had really existed, what kind of people they were, where they lived, nobody knew. In the year 1834 a man named Charles Texier explored Asia Minor on behalf of the French Government. He was seeking the ancient city of Tavium. North of the River Halys some peasants took him to a place where there were massive grey ruins, called Boghazkeui. Texier wrote concerning it: 'The situation of this place in a hilly country, the total lack of any building of the Roman epoch, the grandiose and unique character of the ruins that I saw, all this embarrassed me considerably in finding a suitable designation for the city. I therefore contented myself by calling it the "Pelasgian city".' For forty-five years the ruins of Boghazkeui were given all kinds of different names by archaeologists, and the embarrassment of the explorers remained unrelieved. Then Karl Hunan, a German antiquary, discovered a Hittite town near Sendjirli, north of Aleppo. And thereupon Boghazkeui was recognized as Chattutash, the capital of the Hittites. A little farther to the south-east another Hittite town was excavated by von der Osten, at Alishtar Hüyük; it was situated on a mountain pass on the old main north and south road, and was not a royal city but a commercial town.

These were the peoples of Asia Minor, therefore. Whence they came is still a mystery. They consisted, according to Karl Bittel, the excavator of Boghazkeui, of a non-Indo-Germanic section of the population that was already in Asia Minor in the third millennium B.C., and of a numerically much weaker section, the Hittites, who crossed over from south-eastern Europe to Asia Minor about the end of the third millennium—at about the time, that is to say, of the Babylonian king Hammurabi—and who form the first influx of Indo-Germanic peoples into Anatolia.

The question now is whether there was any intercourse between the highly civilized kings of the Mesopotamian city States and the uncultured people of Hatti, who put up heavy black stone lions everywhere as their own characteristic emblem. In answer to this question it may be said that about the year 2000

merchants from important commercial houses of Mesopotamia lived under the protection of the city of Alishtar in order to exploit the great natural wealth of Anatolia. A hundred years later they had vanished. Clay tablets from Alishtar and Kültepe show how highly developed was the monetary system of the Mesopotamians. Cheques and letters of credit were in extensive use, even the smuggling of currency over the frontiers occurred. Possibly the disappearance of the foreign merchants from Alishtar is to be attributed to an extremely early instance of Asia Minor massacres, a sign that the Hittites had decided to take the conduct of their commercial affairs into their own hands.

The incursion of the Hittites into Babylon was not a matter of peaceful commerce like the visits of the southerners. It took the form of a short pillaging raid that convulsed the whole of Hither Asia. Babylon's second dynasty was overthrown by the Hittites. After their departure a new people settled in Babylon, the Cassites from the land of Elam. The Hyksos withdrew before the onslaught of the Hittites, invaded Egypt, and there founded a pastoral empire. The patriarch Abraham also arose with his followers and journeyed by slow stages from Ur of the Chaldees—the Sumerian Ur—in the wake of the Hyksos into Egypt. De Morgan, the French excavator of Susa, the capital of the Elamites, is of the opinion that at this time the inhabitants of the island of Bahrein (called Dilmun in those days) and of the Arabian coast of the Persian Gulf also migrated northwards to Syria and there under the name of Phoenicians continued to exercise the skill in seafaring that they had gained in the Gulf.

The period after the year 1700, after the Hittite invasion, is confused and obscure. True, the Aryan dynasty of the Cassites ruled in the Babylonian empire for six hundred years, and in Egypt the new kingdom of Thebes arose after the fall of the Hyksos. But the third Great Power of the day, the Hatti empire, is missing. For two hundred years, from 1600–1400 B.C., there is no evidence in Anatolia for the presence of the Hittites. Since the year 1938 it is permissible to suggest that they were established in the intermediate country that has from time immemorial been the scene of war between East and South and West—Syria. During the years 1937 and 1938 Woolley excavated a royal Hittite city in the neighbourhood of Antioch, dating from

the time between 1600 and 1400. A second town had been built upon the ruins of an earlier one. And opposite Woolley's exploratory mound of Tell Achana, the Oriental Institute of Chicago is at work revealing a second Hittite city of about the year 1200. The cuneiform inscriptions on the tablets discovered by Woolley have not yet been deciphered. One thing, however, is definite—the existence of a Hittite kingdom in Syria for the missing two hundred years has been proved.

About 1350 Hattutash was once more the capital of a united kingdom, and an Egyptian queen, the widow of Tutankh-Amen, asked the Hittite King Shuppiluliumash to send her a husband. The king's son, Mursili gives an account of the matter:

And the Queen of Egypt, a widow, sent an Ambassador to my father, with a letter saying: 'My husband is dead, and I have no son. It is told on all sides that thy house is blessed with many sons. If therefore thou wouldst send me one of thy sons he should be my husband, I fear to raise one of my own slaves to that position. . . .' When my father heard this he summoned the men of Hatti to confer with him. And he sent Hattu-Luish to Egypt: 'Go now and bring me a sure report. Perchance they mock us; perchance they have a son of their own lord.'

The Queen of Egypt was grieved at such distrust, and after a letter of remonstrance and an offer to make the husband she desired King of Egypt, the King of the Hittites agreed to her request. The story comes to a sad end, however. Even in those days there were nationalists in Egypt, who had no wish to be ruled by a foreign prince. The prince was murdered in Syria on his way to join the beautiful widowed queen, and Eya, the High Priest, possessed himself of the throne of Egypt.

This is, for once, an almost peaceful story. But mostly there was war. The Hittites made war on the Egyptians. About the year 1300 there was a great battle at Kadesh on the Orontes, and after that a treaty was made that was posted up publicly by the Egyptians in the Hittite language and by the Hittites in the Egyptian language. The Hittites also made war on the Kashgars who lived in the mountains by the Black Sea and who now acquired the title of northern barbarians. Furthermore, a new people from overseas, called Muski or Phrygians, settled in western Anatolia and threatened the existence of the Hittite

kingdom. By about the year 1200 Anatolia was free of the dominion of the Hittites—in Syria there were Hittite States at a later time—the cities and palaces were destroyed by tremendous fires, but unfortunately it does not seem to have occurred to any thoughtful person at the time to scribble a hasty note upon his tablets to tell what actually happened.

Meanwhile the Babylonians too were fighting for their lives. In the north, along the central reaches of the Tigris, where Mosul lies to-day, a new empire had arisen—the Assyrian. A theory has been put forward that at the time of the many migrations after 1700 B.C. the worshippers of the god Ashur moved northwards from southern Mesopotamia and founded the empire of Assyria. By the beginning of the fourteenth century they were already on terms of friendly intercourse with the Egyptians. In 1275 they occupied Babylon for a short period for the first time, and in 1110 for the second time. In the interim the Elamites attacked Babylon and carried off the finest art treasures, some of which were found again at Susa by the French three thousand years later.

Between 1200 and 1000 there was another invasion that covered the whole territory from south to north as far as Cilicia. This time it was the Arameans, who came from Arabia, and they overthrew the first Assyrian empire. They were not founders of States, and so political history hardly mentions them. But they came in vast hordes, they mixed with the population, they occupied Damascus and Aleppo and other small kingdoms in the Syrian highlands. They introduced a new language and this language spread. They took over the alphabetic lettering of the Phœnicians and this form of writing gradually ousted the cuneiform everywhere, though Sumerian, as the classical language, was for a long time retained for important documents, just as Greek and Latin were for a long time in Europe. Their language, called Aramaic or Old Syrian, became the language of the Jews after the Captivity, the language in which Christ taught, the language still used by various Christian Church communities in the Near East.

All the empires and nations that have been shown to exist side by side—the Babylonians and the Elamites, the Phœnicians, the Syrians, and the Egyptians, the Hittites and the Phrygians, and

in addition a Persian tribe called Medes who lived in the mountains to the north of Elam, and the Urarts in Armenia—all these were now brought under the dominion of the central empire, that of the Assyrians. They were the first to found their power upon a free peasant class, and as long as the free men of Assyria fought they were victorious. Not until they became debilitated and developed the system of mercenaries did their warlike power come to an end. They practised great cruelty in bringing neighbouring peoples under their rule. They made vassals of the people of Israel, who had settled in Palestine after their return from the land of Egypt, and carried away twenty-seven thousand Jews to Assyria and Media. They exacted tribute from Babylon and turned the waters of a canal over the ruins of the city. They devastated the land of the Nile, and carried off luxurious Egyptian princesses into captivity. They waged war after war against the stubborn Elamites, until at length King Ashurbanipal was able to cause the proud inscription to be set up:

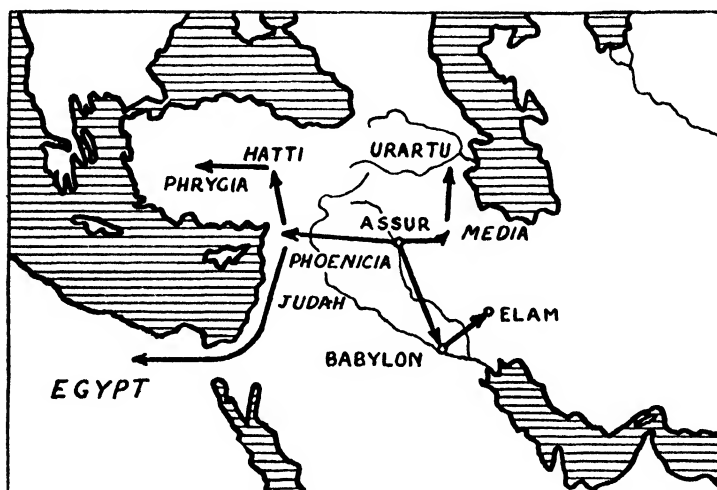
I have brought with me into the land of Assyria the dust of the city of Shushan (Susa) and of the city of Madaktu and of all the other cities. For a month and a day I passed through Elam to its farthest limits. I have taken from the country the pasturing of sheep and cattle and the sound of merry music. I have brought in wild beasts, serpents and the beasts of the desert and gazelles, to occupy the land.

And Ashurbanipal did one thing more. He took the statue of the goddess Nana which the Elamites had stolen away one thousand six hundred and thirty-five years earlier from the Sumerian city of Erech, and brought it back to the people of Erech. For great architectural skill and a love of art go hand in hand with a lust of conquest and cruelty; at least in the case of art like that of the Assyrians which, while it was uncreative and only adapted from others, was a matter of prestige.

After the death of Ashurbanipal, the last of the great Assyrian rulers, in 626, there was another barbarian invasion from the north. This time they came across the Black Sea from southern Russia through Asia Minor to Syria and were called Scythians and Cimmerians. The empire disintegrated. Egypt had already seceded, Babylon made itself independent and under Nebuchadnezzar II once more became so mighty that it destroyed Jeru-



salem, occupied the Phoenician city of Tyre after a thirteen years' siege, and conquered the Egyptians. Nevertheless, this empire, known as the Chaldean—for the Chaldeans had entered southern Mesopotamia from eastern Arabia about the year 900—decayed almost as quickly as it grew great. There was no regenerative force left in the old territories. The first civilized peoples were exhausted. The stage was clear for a new master—the Persians.



THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE

### THE PERSIAN RULE

The people whom to-day we call Persians or, more properly, Iranians, are a conglomeration of several Aryan tribes, some of whom came from south Russia, some from north-east of the Caspian. As long as they lived their own lives among the mountains and highlands, nothing was known of them in the outside world. They probably appeared about the year 2000. The Cas-sites, who invaded Babylon about the year 1900 and ruled there for a long time, were some of them. Another tribe, the Hyr-kanians, settled by the Caspian Sea. The Persians, who gave their name to the whole number, occupied Fars (Persis) the region watered by the Zenda Rud, where to-day Ispahan and Shiraz are situated. They thus became the neighbours on the eastern frontier of the Elamites. They made war upon and

intermixed with the Elamites and gradually became one with them. Other tribes, the Medes, settled in the wide fertile valleys of the Zagros mountains, and were thus the neighbours of the Assyrians. They never formed a united kingdom, but occupied themselves in cattle breeding and tilling the soil and in carrying on minor tribal feuds. The Assyrians, on their way to campaigns in Armenia or Azerbaijan or to the Demawend, passed through the territory occupied by the Medes, and no doubt took one or another of the tribal chieftains prisoner from time to time. They established in Media some of the Jews whom they had taken captive. They regarded the land as their own even though they did not permanently occupy it, for it was not organized for resistance like other conquered empires such as Babel and Elam and Phoenicia.

One day, however, there arose in a Median village a man named Deiokes whose judgements were so wise that all the villagers thronged to hear him and so in time did the people of the whole tribe from near and far. Deiokes, however, a far-seeing man, announced one day: 'I cannot continue for ever to adjudicate in the affairs of all my countrymen and to neglect my own business.' And he ceased from sitting in judgement. Thereupon the old unrest broke out again throughout the land, robbers infested the roads, life and property were menaced. The Medes had meanwhile realized how excellent a thing it was to live in a properly organized country and, exactly as the wily Deiokes had foreseen, they came together and determined to elect a king in order to put a stop to anarchy. The new king Deiokes first formed a company of lifeguards. Then he founded a capital, called Hagmatana—Ecbatana by the Greeks, and now Hamadan. Hamadan lies on the only road from Mesopotamia into the Persian highlands, over six thousand feet above sea-level, at the foot of the eleven thousand feet high granite mountain Delwend, the top of which is snow-covered until well on into the summer and which sends down plenty of water into the valley to make the town green and fruitful.

A man who has taken a collection of tribes and founded an empire, and who possesses an army that must be kept going with fighting and rapine, will look round among his neighbours to see whether and where there is a chance of plunder. Deiokes

(700-647) and his successors Phraortes and Kyaxares did so. What they saw was the brilliant empire of Assyria in the west, the capital of which was Nineveh; continually recurrent danger from the Scythians in the north, who made rapid incursions, devastating the countryside, and then withdrew to impenetrable mountain fastnesses. In the north-west, however, in Asia Minor, was a kingdom called Lydia, which had grown out of the amalgamation of the original inhabitants of the country with the Phrygians who had once destroyed the Hittites. The Greek city colonies along the coast were also loosely connected with it. These people had kept completely aloof from the 'great world'—for Asia Minor is a land to itself, almost like an island—and when Gyges, the Lydian king, startled at the barbarian invasions of the Cimmerians in 667, sent an embassy to ask for help of King Ashurbanipal at Nineveh, the Assyrian felt enormously flattered, though he had never heard of the Lydian kingdom nor of Gyges, its king. But instead of forming an alliance against the barbarians with this other civilized State—that had even evolved a system of coinage—he merely sent back an indeterminate answer and tried to keep clear of international entanglements.

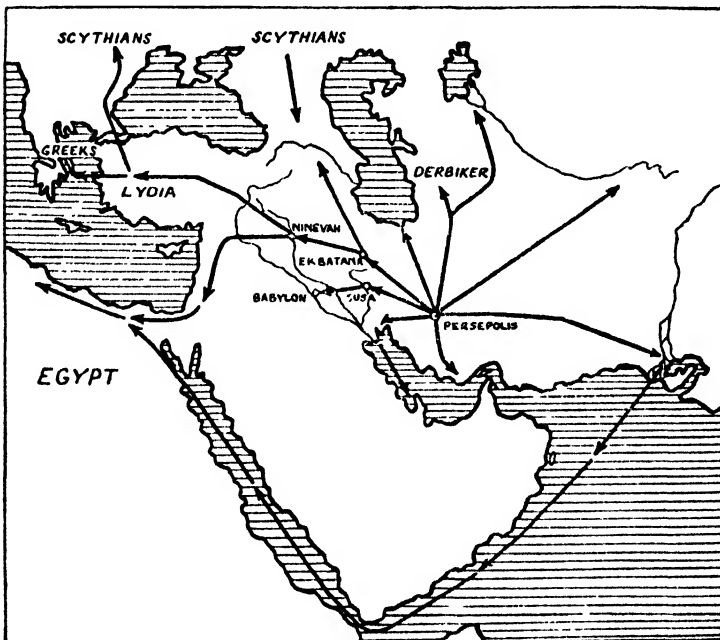
The Medes, however, proceeded differently. After the savage Scythians had overrun the district and had most satisfactorily weakened the Assyrian empire, and at the same time exhausted their own powers, the Scythian leaders and their king were invited to a magnificent banquet by the Medes, were made drunk, and slain. Thereafter the leaderless masses of the Scythians were driven out after heavy fighting.

Then they dealt with the other Powers one after another. First Nineveh was razed to the ground and the Assyrian empire was so utterly lost to memory that two hundred years later Xenophon on his way through had no notion what town he was looking at. Then there was war with Lydia which lasted for six years and remained indecisive. There was always a pleasant way out of such a difficulty in olden days—the daughter of one king was given in marriage to the son of the other and peace was restored. This ensued in the year 584.

In Persian internal affairs, meanwhile, a change had occurred. The Persians who had hitherto been vassals of the Medes grew

powerful under Cyrus the grandson of Achaemenes. In 550 Cyrus marched against Astyages, the last of the Median kings, and occupied the capital Hamadan. This was the beginning of the first Persian world empire, the empire of the Achaemenians, whose capitals were Pasargadae and Persepolis. Once again all the surrounding kingdoms were conquered—Armenia and Cappadocia and Lydia, including King Croesus and his capital, Sardis. Babylon, Phoenicia, and Egypt came next. From the Greek city colonies in Asia Minor the Persians proceeded to the Greek islands in the Aegean. The Scythians were pursued up the Danube, and this represents the first Asiatic invasion of Europe. The country of the Indus was conquered, and from the mouth of the Indus a daring raid was made round Arabia and through the Red Sea upon Egypt. Limits were set in Europe to the mighty realm of Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius, and Xerxes, by the wars which have been taught in schools as marking the beginning of European history under the name of the Persian Wars.

This mighty Persian empire was the pinnacle of a great



THE PERSIAN EMPIRE

homogeneous development. It included all the ancient empires and their traditions. A network of excellent roads and canals was built. The first uniform coinage system was evolved. The administrative technique, however, was not as fully organized as perhaps the word empire would lead the modern reader to suppose. In the more remote districts the local tribal chieftains were made governors; authority could not have been exercised otherwise. The return of a large part of the Jews to Jerusalem was not the result of any particular reverence on the part of King Cyrus for the divine mission of the Children of Israel, but rather of the desire to have at least one group of faithful adherents in the rebellious Syrian highlands. In view of this compulsory decentralization, a system of mutual supervision was considered necessary, such as often reappears in the later history of the Near East. A satrap, a general, and a Secretary of State were appointed to each province. Each was independent of the others. Each reported direct to the capital. Each was, of course, the enemy of the others, and the danger of concerted rebellion was slight. Over and above this, at unstated intervals an inspector with plenary powers and an escort of troops would appear, to investigate, punish, depose. The system, supplemented by the early practice of the sale of offices and of heavy exactions of taxes from the working population, functioned excellently from the point of view of administration. But it probably did foster the sort of moral depravity which from this time onwards remains a characteristic of the East. Another eastern peculiarity which owed its inception to the Achaemenian empire is the segregation of women at Court under the guardianship of eunuchs. As a result of their exceptional position the eunuchs came in time to exercise an intangible power, the extent of which it was impossible to gauge, which did not depend upon force but upon intrigue.

These are the darker sides. They are not mentioned in order to detract from the glory of those great days, their wonderful architecture and sculpture and metal work, but because, like desert and lack of water side by side with the most luxuriant fertility, they continue to be the determinant factors of life in the Near East—the amassing of treasure, jewels and works of art in the capitals, the life of luxury lived by the nobles, and at

the same time the exploitation of the working classes; the venality of the organs of justice, administration and finance, and the resultant instability. Such abuses did not occur everywhere to the same degree. They were probably always rarer in the hardier districts than in the milder ones, infrequent in the country and common in the towns; and often the infusion of fresh blood from beyond the borders brought with it greater honesty as well as barbarism, that lasted until the forces of the land had taken hold of the conquerors and in their turn overcome them.

#### THE FIRST EUROPEAN INVASION—GREEKS AND ROMANS

In 1897 an English telegraphist was murdered on the coast of Makran in south-east Iran. A murder as such is not a cause for surprise in these parts. But Europeans, who at that time were mostly represented by Englishmen, were treated with the greatest caution. For it was known that the murder of a European was apt to have the most unpleasant consequences. Sleepy officials suddenly became active and malevolent. Inspectors came out from the capital. And usually several people were hanged, irrespective of whether they had really had anything to do with the murder or not. Thus the murder of the Englishman was a remarkable episode. The reason given by the population was that they had heard that the Greeks had been beaten by the Turks.

This story shows that in the East, up to very recent times, the Greeks still stood for Europeans as a whole. A loss of prestige by the Greeks meant a loss of prestige for Europe. At the end of the nineteenth century the ordinary man did not realize as his Government in Teheran did that Turkey was the enemy occupying the frontier districts—he only realized a general collective feeling of East against West.

This attitude to the Greeks as representatives of Europe is the result of a number of curious processes of fusion that have coloured history. The first great European invasion was that of the Greek, Alexander. His is a dazzling figure, as irresistible as his conquering hosts. He was so tremendously respected, admired, and honoured, that the Persians evidently felt subconsciously that they must assimilate him in blood-relationship.

The legend, embodied in Firdausi's great national epic, and regarded by the Iranian people as historical truth, simply makes Alexander the son of Darius II, who is said to have married the daughter of Filigus of Roum (Philip of Macedon) and then to have divorced her, after she had become the mother of Alexander. This makes Alexander a half-brother of Darius Codomanus, the last of the Achaemenians, and by winning a victory over him he was not invading foreign territory but was merely entering upon his rightful inheritance. Thus the historical sub-consciousness of a people—if one may be permitted to assume the existence of such—transmuted the conquest of a continent by an alien ruler into an unbroken legitimate development according to the laws of blood succession.

The second historical transformation in connection with the Greeks is contained in the Asiatic cognomen 'Filigus of Roum'. After the Greeks came the Romans. They were in every way much more thorough-going in colonization and administration, that is to say in the occupation of a country. Nevertheless they have not remained in the memory of the East as a separate nation. They have been fused with the Greeks. This is not surprising when it is remembered that the traditions of western Rome, the empire that is regarded by Europeans as the real Roman empire and that was in touch with Asia for only about five hundred years, were carried on by eastern Rome, by Byzantium. And Byzantium was Greek. The altercations between Asia and Byzantium went on for a thousand years. The breach between eastern and western Rome which according to European ideas forms the foundation of modern history was hardly perceptible to the people of Hither Asia. Even western Roman conquerors like Sulla and Pompey and Germanicus, did not come straight from Rome, from the land of the Italici, but by way of Greece or Egypt. Thus the fusion of Greeks and Romans into Greeks was carried out, keeping the name of Rome and making the resultant blend representative of the whole of Europe.

There are two methods of occupying a new country. One is to settle in it first and then to secure the safety of one's own people there by force of arms. The second is to begin by making a victorious entry by force of arms and afterwards to undertake

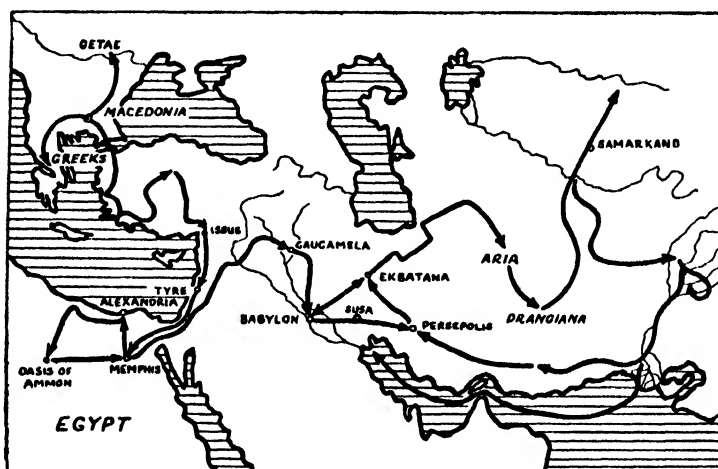
the settlement there of one's own people. The second was the method of ancient Rome, the first of the Greeks. It was not really a 'method' so much as the result of necessity and chance. The home country became too small, fertile land lay unoccupied overseas, and emigration and colonization were the consequence. This was the way the Greek colonies arose on the edges of Asia Minor. Some of them were independent—small city States after the model of those at home. Sometimes they were subject to neighbouring kingdoms or principalities or at least were tributary to them.

Apart from these peaceable agricultural and mercantile Hellenes there existed an altogether different type of Greeks in the Near East and in north Africa. These were the soldiers. The Persian wars had shown that a body of Greek troops was able by reason of superior organization and discipline to tackle a numerically very much larger Persian army. From that time on, the Greek hoplites were popular as mercenaries wherever war was waged in the Near East. When the Egyptians planned to rise against the Persian king, Artaxerxes III, they appointed Greek generals. Politicians made every effort to secure the highly prized Greek troops for their side by alliances with one or another of the Greek States. Xenophon's 'ten thousand', whose campaigns he describes in the *Anabasis*, were such a Greek army. During a Persian civil war for the succession to the throne between two brothers they fought on the side of the younger brother Cyrus. If Cyrus had not been mortally wounded he would have won the battle. After this battle the Greeks brought home the knowledge that the Persians for all their numerical superiority simply could not stand against them, not only on Greek soil where narrow gorges and valleys prevented the deploying of large armies but also in pitched battles in the wide plains of Mesopotamia. As once the horses of the 'western' King Croesus had shied at the smell of the camels of the eastern army and thus enabled the great Cyrus to win the victory over the Lydians, so now the Persians shied before the terrifying Greek infantry and allowed themselves to be driven to flight.

Like all commanders of genius, Alexander was a widely read man. He knew his history. He relied upon the Greek military experience of Kunaxa, he relied upon the Greek colonies in



Asia Minor, which formed the backbone of his powers of resistance, and he relied upon the superiority of the Greeks as seafarers. Nevertheless, to one who has passed through the same vast desolate mountainous regions, though only in part and with modern methods of transport, his campaigns are an inconceivable achievement. Within eleven years he conquered the whole of the Near Eastern world and considerable portions beyond that. Hamadan, the capital of the Medes, became the military headquarters of the vast empire. Persepolis, the capital of the conquered Persians, was burnt to the ground. The empire of Alexander stretched from Samarkand and India to Africa.



ALEXANDER'S CAMPAIGNS

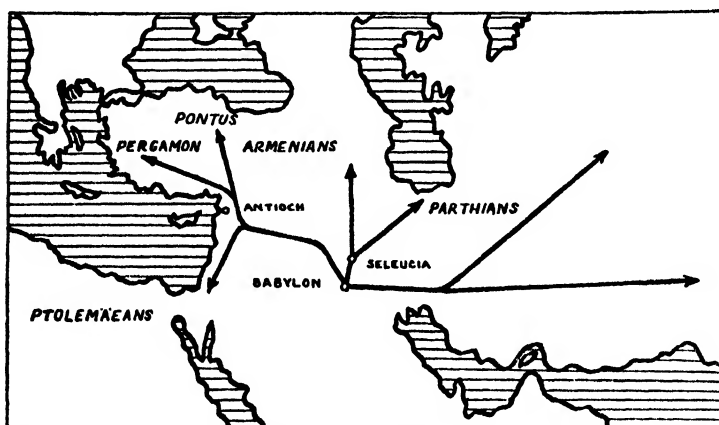
In Susa, the ancient Elamite capital, the boundary between highland and lowland, Alexander initiated the great union between East and West. Physically, by his marriage with Statira, the daughter of Darius III; and his example was followed by more than ten thousand officers and men. Politically, by the foundation of Greek settlements in all parts of the empire. Symbolically, by the reconstruction of the Tower of Babel and the worship of the ancient gods. Morally—to-day we should probably say ideologically—by the transition from the liberal State organization of Hellenism to absolutism. His soldiers, veterans who had been through all the rigours of his campaigns, felt that this was the last straw. They had of course been dissatisfied at other times. They had considered the advance on

India to be unnecessary. The return through Makran—a province in which Greek prestige still stood high at the end of the nineteenth century thanks to Alexander—was an unexampled hardship. Arrian describes the passage: 'They met with great mountains of sand that was not hard and cohesive but so loose that when they stepped on it they sank as in a bog. They were tortured by raging heat and unquenchable thirst. A large part of the army perished.' All this they had gone through and endured, as well as the many years' absence from home. But now they mutinied. They grasped the relevant point clearly—the lord of a free nation was degrading it by making himself a god. They gathered outside Alexander's tent and mocked him, saying: 'Carry on your war alone, you and your father, the god Ammon!' Alexander succeeded in mollifying them. He was a great orator. And as he spoke to them face to face the people felt themselves to be raised and treated as equals. Each individual felt the whole force of the address that was really intended for the general mass, and was thereby pacified. The crisis was past for the time being. But this did not resolve the conflict. How Alexander would have settled it will never be known, for he died a year later, in 323.

Plutarch, with his civilized Western superiority, epitomizes in a few sentences Alexander's achievements in regard to Asiatics: 'He taught the Hyrkanians the institution of marriage, the Arachosians agriculture; he taught the Sogdians to support, not to kill, their parents; the Persians to respect, not to wed, their mothers. Wondrous philosopher who made the Scythians bury their dead instead of eating them.' These were the very first seeds of Hellenization. It progressed under Alexander's successors, spread, and became more profound. From the struggles between the successors, which are taught to unwilling pupils under the name of the Wars of the Diadochi—'unwilling' because apparently these wars lead nowhere—came forth a great empire in the Near East, the empire of the Seleucides. One of the generals, a young man named Seleucus fought with varying fortunes for twenty years, and then remained master of Babylon. He conquered the Persian provinces as far as the Jaxartes. He occupied Syria. He founded two cities called Seleucia, one as the first capital of his empire, on the Tigris,

about fifty miles north of Babylon; the other in Syria where the Orontes runs into the Mediterranean. With the wars for the possession of Cilicia and Asia Minor the centre of gravity of the empire shifted to Syria, and Antioch became the capital. This was important, for three hundred years later Antioch, a flourishing Greek city, built upon Asiatic soil and under Roman dominion, became the centre whence Christianity was radiated to the world.

The Seleucides were exactly what Alexander's offspring had been intended to be—a mixture of Greek and Iranian blood. The first Seleucus married a daughter of Spitames of Bactria. The Seleucid empire became a conglomerate—Greek cities



THE SELEUCIDES

lay amid Asiatic cities; Persians and Medes and Syrians were found among Greeks and Macedonians in high administrative posts. Hellenism changed Asiatic man and yet was itself changed under the influence of its Asiatic surroundings. The Greeks of Hellas looked down upon the Syrian Greeks—even when they had not any intermixture of Syrian blood. They were different in just the same way as a Briton who has grown up in India is distinguishable from the young Englishman who has been sent home to school. The 'western orientalism' of the Greek rule is described by Sir Percy Sykes:

... In their conduct towards their subjects they distinguished between the Asiatic, accustomed to obey passively, and the

Macedonian or Greek, whose character was strongly opposed to passive obedience. . . . The rule of the Seleucids was two-faced, inasmuch as it was absolute towards its Oriental subjects, but was tempered by the army, which was mainly a home-born and therefore a national force.<sup>1</sup>

As the Seleucid rule grew weaker, other empires began to arise on its frontiers—the Pergamon kingdom in western Asia Minor, the successor to Phrygia and Lydia, and indeed one of Alexander's Succession States; the kingdom of Cappadocia in the centre; the kingdom of Pontus in the north, on the shores of the Black Sea; the kingdom of Armenia in the north-east; the kingdom of the Turanian Parthians in the mountains in the north of Iran. The Seleucides realized that these latter were the most primitive and therefore the most dangerous neighbours. In the year 209 B.C. they waged war in Mazenderan and Bactria, but they allowed the Parthians to remain feudal lords, and as soon as the empire of Seleucus was weakened from the western side by the Romans, the Parthians advanced, occupied the Iranian territory, pushed on into Mesopotamia, and built a new capital, Ctesiphon, opposite to Seleucia on the other bank of the Tigris. The Seleucid empire was gradually crushed between the Roman advance from the west and the Parthian from the east, until at length the Romans and Parthians met face to face. Roughly speaking, the main frontier in the eastern section remained the Euphrates. In the north curious things were happening. King Attalos III of Pergamon bequeathed his land to the Romans. The Romans accepted the legacy, gave the eastern portion to their friend, the King of Pontus, and kept the best part in western Asia Minor for themselves to make the new province, Asia.

The problem of Armenia now became acute. It was regarded as a 'sphere of influence' by the Parthians as well as by Rome's ally, the King of Pontus. Even then the Ararat territory was an important frontier zone, the storm-centre between several kingdoms. Lucullus conquered part of Armenia, but his soldiers refused to face the Ararat mountains. Pompey took his army as far as the Armenian capital Artaxata and advanced into the Caucasus, farther even than Alexander had ever gone. Crassus

<sup>1</sup> Sir Percy Sykes: *History of Persia*, Vol. I, p. 332.

was decoyed into an ambush in Armenia by the Parthians with the help of an Arab sheikh and was defeated. The victorious Parthian general Surena—to give an idea of the luxury of great Oriental lords in olden times—brought with him for his private requirements during the campaign a thousand camels carrying his baggage, and two hundred chariots containing his concubines. After the battle—as another example of Oriental customs—his lord and king thought he would be too dangerous and he was as a result quietly put out of the way. History does not relate what happened to the camels and the concubines; but it would be fairly safe to assume that they were taken over by the king. Ten thousand Roman prisoners were carried away eastwards and settled near Merv.

The struggle for Armenia continued. Shortly before his death Caesar planned a campaign against the Parthians. Mark Antony invaded Armenia and brought back the standards that Crassus and the Romans had lost. Trajan invaded Armenia and made Mesopotamia into a Roman province. Severus invaded Armenia and plundered Ctesiphon.

Even after a change of dynasty in Persia Armenia remained the apple of discord between East and West. In the south a vassal prince named Ardashir rose against the Parthians, who were so thoroughly Hellenized that they might almost be reckoned among Alexander's Succession States. Ardashir traced his descent from a certain Sassan, who again was descended from the Achaemenian king Artaxerxes, the Long-handed. The Parthian ruling house too claimed descent from the Achae-menians, for a legitimate pedigree is of the greatest importance in the East. But, despite their having successfully held their own against the West for three hundred and seventy-five years, they faded from the historical memory of their people. Firdausi hardly mentions them in his epic. The Sassanians, on the other hand, were the true, the eulogized transmitters of the glorious old traditions. They took their origin in Fars, the most truly Iranian of all the provinces, they were innovators, conquerors, master builders. Ardashir, the first Sassanian, immediately replaced the lax and defective administrative system of the Parthians by an organization modelled upon that of Darius. He never dreamt of indulging in the luxurious excesses of the

later Achaemenians and of his own successors—as is shown by a saying attributed to him: ‘No power can exist without an army, no army without money, no money without agriculture, and no agriculture without justice.’

With the hard-won sovereignty of the Persian empire, Ardashir also took over the hostility to Rome. To the warning sent by the pacifist emperor Severus Alexander that he should remain within his own frontiers and not try to ‘revolutionize Asia’ he sent a defiant answer, and occupied Armenia. His son, the great Shahpur, went a step further. He took the Roman emperor Valerian prisoner. The whole of the East seethed with this tremendous news. The repercussions were enormous. Legends grew up about the capture. The whole episode was put into one of the famous Iranian rock sculptures—the great Shahpur is shown proudly seated on horseback, and before him kneels the fettered Roman emperor.



THE ROMAN EMPIRE, PERSIA, ARMENIA

This, however, did not settle the Armenian question. There came other and mighty Romans. Diocletian dispatched his commander-in-chief, Galerius. Galerius marched into Armenia and pushed back the frontier from the Euphrates to the Tigris. Later (307–379) a second Shahpur occupied the throne and reconquered all the lost territory from the Romans. Peace never lasted very long, and the Armenian problem, which with the introduction of Christianity also became a religious question, became a factor in the relations between the Persians and Byzantines.

Apart from the struggle for Armenia, what did the Romans do in the Near East? They organized Roman provinces exactly

as they did in Gaul and Spain and north Africa. They built the same roads as they did in Europe—to this day old, rough Roman roads are sometimes the only usable ones in Asia Minor. And they did justice according to the same Law that prevailed in Rome and Athens and Marseilles. The Greeks dissipated their energies on foreign soil. Their colonies lay scattered until beyond the Oxus, little islands within the great ocean of the Asiatic world. The Romans never went as far as the Greeks, but what they took they held. They followed up their conquests by continually sending out fresh men. The links with Rome were always close. The Roman was always a Roman, even in Syria. 'Where the Roman conquers he colonizes,' said Seneca.

With the establishment of Roman provinces in Asia the boundary between East and West was pushed a long way farther east. It was a definite border line between completely different peoples, cultures, philosophies of life. The Romans never 'went eastern'. Everything that lay on their side of the boundary was western. They permeated their lands in the truest sense of the word, whereas Greece had distributed its sons over a wider area, but as isolated individuals.

With the legacy of Rome in the East, Byzantium also adopted the new Syrian-born religion—Christianity. This fact lent a fresh aspect to the subsequent struggle between the two Powers in the East. The religious motive was now added to the political and the predatory motives. It was a more or less powerful one according to the strength of each prince's religious convictions. The first wars over Armenia—which remained a cause of contention despite the fact that it had been partitioned between the two States in A.D. 384—were carried on entirely on the old lines. There was, however, a period of eighty years' peace, while the invasions of the 'White Huns' were repelled. Meanwhile there was civil war in Armenia, and the Persians attempted to convert the Christianized Armenians to the doctrines of Zoroaster. In between whiles there were times when the relations between Byzantium and Persia were of the friendliest. The Emperor Arcadius, for example, on his death-bed commended his son Theodosius to the protection of the Sassanian king, Yezdigird. And the king selected a sagacious eunuch as guar-

dian for the boy and sent him to Byzantium. Theodosius showed his gratitude by refraining all his life from any act of war against Persia.

In the sixth century the wars began afresh, from now on to a great extent under the banner of religion. Danger from the Huns was no longer to be feared, and Byzantium refused to continue paying a subsidy to Persia for safeguarding the passes of the Caucasus to the north. Armenia once again became the chief theatre of war. About the middle of the century the two contending Powers were represented by two mighty men—Justinian and Noshirwan the Just. The power of the first extended westwards, even Abyssinia and southern Arabia being converted to Christianity. The Persian invaded India as well as Syria.

After the death of Justinian nearly all the Asiatic possessions of eastern Rome were lost. A Persian satrap took the place of the Christian dynasty in southern Arabia. The Persian king, Khusru Parwiz, invaded Syria, plundered Antioch, occupied Damascus, marched into Cappadocia, plundered Jerusalem, and carried away the 'true Cross', the most sacred relic of Christendom. The whole of Asia Minor as far as Chalcedon opposite Constantinople was occupied by the Persians. At nights the Byzantines used to see the flames of the burning villages on the Asiatic side. Even Egypt was vanquished by the Persians. The mighty conqueror sent the following message to the thirty-six-year-old Emperor Heraclius in 611:

Khusru, greatest of gods and lord of the earth, to Heraclius, his wretched and insensate slave. You say that you trust in your god. Why, then, did he not deliver Jerusalem out of my hand? . . . Do not deceive yourself by vain hopes in Christ, who was not able even to save himself from the Jews, who slew him by nailing him to a cross.

Heraclius was a brave man. He had successfully administered a province in north Africa. As emperor, he sought to carry out the reforms in the voluptuous city of Constantinople that were necessary if the empire was to be preserved. He realized that he was hindered on all sides by the feverish thirst for pleasure of the masses, the corruptibility of the officials, the lust for power of the aristocracy. In desperation he determined at last to transfer



the seat of government from Constantinople—where not even the sight of blazing villages on the Asiatic shore could bring the population to its senses—to Carthage, which had been thoroughly well disciplined during his time as governor. He felt secure there, and hoped from there to organize resistance to Persia. News of his plan spread. The people were alarmed. And at this point the forces of religion joined the forces of war—the Patriarch Sergius preached a Crusade. The Church sacrificed its treasures of gold, the populace was roused to enthusiasm, and determined to fetch back the Cross that the Persians had stolen away. In 622 Heraclius went at the head of his army to Cilicia and Cappadocia, from thence through Armenia to Mesopotamia and as far as Ctesiphon, the Persian capital. He was victorious all along the line. The year 622 was the date of Mahomet's flight from Mecca to Medina, the date at which the Islamic chronology begins. In this year began the six years' war in the course of which the two who had hitherto been masters of the Near East once more restored the 'balance of power'. All the provinces that Byzantium had lost since 604 were returned. In 629 the Cross was re-erected in Jerusalem. But in 628 Mahomet had already written letters to the King of Abyssinia, to Heraclius, and to the Persian King, demanding that they should adopt Islam. The reactions of the three monarchs are interesting. The Abyssinian, whose people adhered to its particular brand of Coptic Christianity until the twentieth century, agreed. The Persian, who was the first to be overthrown, refused flatly. And the Byzantine, who succeeded in holding his own during eight hundred years of defensive warfare until the fall of Constantinople, said nothing at all on the question of doctrine, but sent presents.

### THE ARABS BRING A NEW GOD

It is easy enough in the twentieth century to look back over the tablets of history and to see that a dangerous world Power was nascent, while the two Great Powers in the Near East were exhausting themselves in long drawn-out warfare. It would be much fairer to ask whether the Persians and Byzantines could in any way have foreseen what was brewing in the Arabic

world, whether by exercising wise forethought, by early co-operation, they could have safeguarded their realms.

The answer is no. The Arabian peninsula had always been known and had never been dangerous. Known, not in the sense of explored, for only the natives could stand the life of the desert; but known as an inhospitable land, difficult to get to, surrounded by the sea on three sides, without a single good natural harbour, intersected by the most arid of all deserts, the Rub-al-Kali, inhabited by people subject to no single monarch, but split up into clans and tribes. Even in the days of the Sumerians some of these tribes had raided and plundered the fertile Land of the Two Rivers. The raids were repeated from time to time. They were unpleasant but not really serious, because they were not part of any organized plan. In the borderlands between Arabia proper and the eastern States small Arabic tribal lordships had grown up. Mention has already been made of the sheikh of such a tribe in Mesopotamia. He was secretly allied with the Persian king, he enticed the Roman general Crassus into a trap, and kept up a running report to General Surena, the Persian commander-in-chief, concerning the movements of the Romans.

The Arabs had also been known in olden times as masters of the important trade routes for incense and spices, precious stones, gold, and rich textiles. The caravan route led from Hadramaut in the south through Mecca to Petra, the rich merchant-city east of the Jordan built of rose-pink rock. For a long time the buyers of these goods had believed that all the treasures came from the unknown interior of Arabia. In reality a great part was already being brought from India. The Arabs, however, preserved the secret of their trade monopoly until the Romans—angry at the almost prohibitive prices charged by the Arabic middlemen—opened up the sea-way through the Red Sea. From that time on the importance of Mecca declined, as did that of the other Arabian caravan stations.

Such, then, were the neighbours of the Great Powers in the west. They worshipped the seven planets and certain goddesses, and were to some extent influenced by the religion of the Sabeans in the south of the peninsula. They possessed a curious little reddish-black meteoric stone that was built into the eastern corner of the Ka'aba, a temple in Mecca, and to which they

made sacrificial pilgrimages. There had never been war with them, for they themselves had never invaded foreign territory as a compact mass, and their own land was in no way tempting to expeditionary forces. There was not the smallest reason to reckon with the Arabs as a factor in world politics.

There had been one single battle between Persians and an Arab tribe before the Hejira (622), but it had not occurred until the lifetime of Mahomet. Since aspiring mankind prefers to think that all great events are heralded and presaged this battle was called a 'precursor'. The story of it is interesting. An Arab prince called Noman, who dwelt on the eastern fringe of the desert between Jerusalem and the valley of the Euphrates, had a charming daughter and a bitter enemy. The enemy knew that no Arab would ever give his daughter to a Persian. He managed to bring the maiden to the notice of Parwiz, the King of Persia, and the Shah demanded the Arab's beautiful daughter for his seraglio. Noman declined the honour. Filled with rage, the great king sent an army against Noman. The Arab packed up his belongings and left them in the care of his friend, the tribal chief of the Shaybani. Then he repaired to the Court of the great king in order to plead his cause. The king, however, had him executed, and demanded that the Shaybani should deliver up Noman's goods. They refused. An army of forty thousand men was sent against them. The Arabian components of the army deserted during the final battle and the Persians were defeated. Referring to this victory Mahomet is said to have remarked to his compatriots: 'This is the first day whereon the Arabs have obtained satisfaction from the Persians; through me have they obtained help!'<sup>1</sup>

Mahomet the Prophet belonged to the clan of the Kureish. In the days of his great-grandfather Hashim the clan had split into two hostile factions. The cause of the quarrel was which of the two factions should guard the keys of the Ka'aba. At first it was decided that the elder line should have the keys; and the younger, represented by Hashim, should have the right to provide the pilgrims with food and water. By this means the remunerative pilgrim trade was equitably apportioned. Since,

<sup>1</sup> Sykes: *History of Persia*, Vol. I, p. 511.

however, in the course of time Hashim's hospitality came to be famous, Omayya, of the elder line, rose against his uncle, Hashim, and demanded that the matter should be settled legally. Hashim stipulated that the loser should forfeit fifty black-eyed camels and leave the city of Mecca. Omayya lost the case and emigrated to Syria. His successors called themselves Omayyads after him. The fifty camels were slaughtered by Hashim to mark the occasion.

Hashim's son Shiba was of little account because he had only one son. He therefore made a vow that if ten sons should be born to him he would sacrifice one to the gods. The tenth son duly made his appearance and was named Abdallah. Sadly Shiba prepared for the sacrifice. But his friends prevailed upon him to draw lots between his son Abdallah and ten camels, which represent the blood-money for a man's life. Nine times the lot fell upon Abdallah, and the tenth time upon the camels. Abdallah, having been preserved, became the father of a posthumous son—Mahomet. Shiba treated the gods right royally—he sacrificed a hundred camels instead of the promised ten.

The child Mahomet was fatherless, but had powerful relatives. He suffered from epileptic fits and, as is the custom with well-born city children, he was sent into the country for the sake of his health into the care of a nomad woman of the Beni Sad tribe. The Beni Sad spoke the purest of all Arabic, and among Arabs, who regard oratory as the finest of all arts, the beauty, purity, and persuasiveness of a man's speech is greatly valued. 'Verily I am the most perfect Arab amongst you,' said the Prophet later, 'my descent is from the Kureish, and my tongue is the tongue of the Beni Sad.'<sup>1</sup>

The young Mahomet went to Syria as a trader. There he learnt to know the doctrines of the Jews and of the Christians. He married a rich widow named Khadija. She looked on him as a being apart, and spent her time looking after her business affairs, thereby giving her husband the opportunity to wander and to devote himself to his divine visions. In 613 Mahomet announced that he was sent by God as Prophet to the people of Arabia. His following was small. During the first few years it rose to forty persons. The inhabitants of Mecca at first treated

<sup>1</sup> Sykes: *History of Persia*, Vol. I, p. 510.

him as a harmless fool. Then they grew angry at his presumption. And finally they persecuted him.

Mahomet advised his adherents to flee to Abyssinia. They crossed the Red Sea and came before the Negus and told him what the Prophet had made of them:

Oh King, we were a barbarous folk, worshipping idols, eating carrion, committing shameful deeds, violating ties of consanguinity, and evilly entreating our neighbours, the strong among us consuming the weak; and thus we continued until God sent unto us an Apostle from our midst, whose pedigree and integrity and faithfulness and purity of life we knew, to summon us to God, that we should declare His unity and worship Him, and put away the stones and idols which we and our fathers used to worship in His stead; and he bade us be truthful in speech, and faithful in the fulfilment of our trusts, and observing of the ties of consanguinity and the duties of neighbours, and to refrain from forbidden things and from blood; and he forbade immoral acts and deceitful words, and consuming the property of orphans, and slandering virtuous women; and he commanded us to worship God and to associate naught else with Him, and to pray and give alms and fast.<sup>1</sup>

The Negus wept when he heard the tidings and cried: 'In truth this man's words and the words of Moses proceed from the same Light.'

With his move to Medina in 622 Mahomet began a foreign political phase. At first the Jewish tribes in Medina had observed his influence over the Arabs with astonishment. Mahomet and his followers still prayed with their faces towards Jerusalem, for the divine revelation had proceeded from the Angel Gabriel. But later the Jews grew hostile, and the direction of prayer was changed towards Mecca, which pleased the Arabs. After a long struggle Mahomet drove out the three Jewish tribes from Medina one after the other—the Beni Kainucas, the Beni Nazir, and the Beni Koreiza. Their property was confiscated and divided up among the faithful. This gave the movement a material basis.

The conquest of Mecca was the next undertaking. An expedition to the Gulf of Akaba followed, embassies were sent to all

<sup>1</sup> Sykes: *History of Persia*, Vol. I, p. 513.

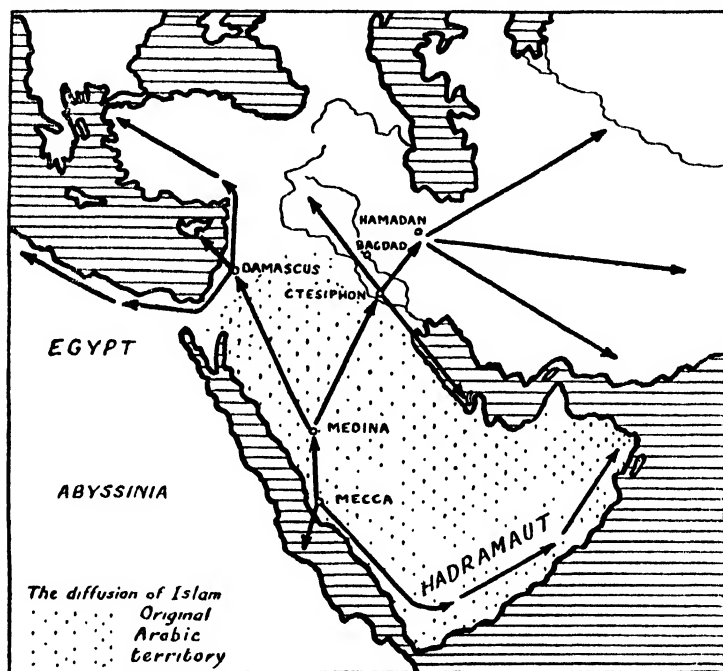
the tribes, and by the time Mahomet died, in 632, the whole of Arabia had been converted to the new faith.

For the first time Arabs were united in the matter of faith as well as nationally. A hitherto unknown sense of power was added to missionary zeal. Their own homeland was too inadequate, too indifferent, to contain their new impulse for action. The expansion took place under the first four of Mahomet's successors. These were the Caliphs Abu Bekr, Omar, Othman, and Ali, the first of whom was the father-in-law and the last the son-in-law of the Prophet. War was waged simultaneously against Byzantium and against the Persian empire. In 634 the armies of the once victorious Heraclius were defeated at Yermuk, and Syria was thereby won to Islam. The conquest of individual cities, Damascus, Antioch, Jerusalem, was only a question of time. Between 633 and 634 the Arabs sent an expeditionary force into the Persian empire from the south, from the upper end of the Persian Gulf. By 635 their army stood beside the Euphrates on the heights of the capital. At the command of Omar a mission consisting of twenty leading Arabs went to Ctesiphon to demand that the Persian king Yezdigird should adopt the new faith.

The city mob jeered at the home-made garments of the emissaries. They were brought before the king. His answer was full of truly Iranian arrogance. He reminded the ambassadors of their poverty, of their habit of child-murder, and of the fact that they ate lizards. The Arabs replied: 'All that you say of the former state of the Arabs is true. Green lizards were their food; they buried their infant daughters alive; indeed many feasted upon dead bodies and drank blood. . . . That was our former state. But God in His mercy has sent us a holy book by His holy Prophet, which teaches us the true Faith. We are poor and needy. But the Lord will endow us with wealth and still our hunger. Hast thou chosen the sword? Then the sword shall decide between us.' And the sword decided in favour of the supporters of the new faith in the four days' battle of Kadesia. A few days later the sons of the desert had entered into the glories of the Sassanian capital. Most of them saw gold for the first time in their lives, and every warrior received as his share of the booty treasure to the value of about five hundred pounds

in modern money. The Arabs took camphor to be salt and used it for cooking. One of the more quick-witted men remonstrated with a slower comrade among the soldiers for selling the daughter of a Persian noble too cheaply at a thousand dirhem. And the man answered that he had not known that there was any number higher than ten times a hundred.

Egypt was conquered and the new city of Cairo was built, as also Basra and Kufa in Iraq. While in the north, despite sundry



THE ARABS

invasions of Asia Minor and the siege of Constantinople, the Arabs never succeeded in permanently occupying Asia Minor, the subjection of the various Persian provinces proceeded without a hitch. In northern Iran they advanced to Derbent in the Caucasus. In the east the country was subjugated right up to Khorasan, and after the year 700 the Arabs pushed on to Samarkand and into the valley of the Indus. The Persian empire was overwhelmed; Egypt, Palestine, and Syria were severed from the Byzantine empire; Asia Minor alone remained upon Asiatic soil as the last of the ancient Great Powers.

Like all upstarts who become masters over a more highly civilized people, the Arabs at first allowed the State machinery to run on its old lines. Persian officials remained at their posts until the Arabs had learnt enough to be able to take their places. The great church of the Christians on the site of which now stands the Omayyad mosque, at first served both Christians and Moslems as a place of worship. Not until they really felt that their power had been consolidated did they acquire the moral assurance that permitted them really to make the indigenous alien elements subordinate.

The Arabs, contrary to the Greek and Roman invaders, had no home to be the object of all their longings and their ideal of beauty—no Athens, no Rome. Mecca, the most prosperous of their cities was poor in comparison with places like Damascus and Ctesiphon, Ispahan, and Hamadan. For this reason the Arabs took root as no others had ever done before. The Romans had, it is true, colonized the countries subject to them, but had never treated them as anything but colonies. The Arabs really adopted the conquered countries. A great part of the territory owned by them is to this very day not only Islamic but actually Arabic. Persia, that—apart from Hun invasions which were of short duration—had never been occupied by any foreigners except the Greeks, that had never been subject to the disciplined domination of Rome, was now permeated to the core by the Arabic mentality and the Arabic religion. The Arabic influence continued to be effective long after the country had thrown off the foreign yoke.

The first four famous Caliphs, who had been chosen on account of their close relationship with the Prophet, were followed in 661 by Muawiyeh, a man of the House of Omayya, which had been driven out of Mecca by the younger branch of the Kureish. He owed his elevation to his victory over the fourth Caliph Ali. It caused the first great religious schism in Islam, the split between those who supported his appointment—the Sunnites—and those who remained faithful to Ali—the Shiites. He relied upon the support of Syria, as was only right in a member of a family which had emigrated to Syria. His trans-



ference of the capital to Damascus was the main cause of dissatisfaction. Iraq felt that it was being treated with contumely. Had not the capital of the Sassanians and of the Parthians and the Seleucides been in Mesopotamia? Did not Alexander himself regard Babylon as the centre of his future empire? To the political dissatisfaction in Kufa and Basra was added the fanaticism of the Shiites who were suppressed but who continually attempted fresh revolt. The Persians too were discontented; for even those who had been converted to Islam were still treated as second-class citizens. Their resistance was strongest in Khorasan, the most distant of the provinces.

None of this weighed very heavily as long as the Omayyads were powerful. But Muawiyeh, the first Caliph who had not come into close contact with the Prophet, had introduced a new tradition—the descent of the Caliphate in his own family. The power of this family declined. Weak Caliphs succeeded the strong ones. Moreover, as time went on, a remarkable diminution of revenue was found. According to the wish of the Prophet, heathens of all descriptions had been forced to adopt Islam at the point of the sword. But the adherents of ‘revealed’ religions—Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians—were permitted to keep their own faith. They were obliged to pay heavy taxes for the privilege. Only Moslems were free of taxation. Accordingly, as Islam gained ground, the revenue from the taxation of those of different faiths declined. The State treasury grew emptier while the demand for the luxuries of life increased.

All these various currents of discontent were turned to account by another family, who traced their descent from Hashim, Mahomet’s great-grandfather. They took their name from Abbas, the grandson of Hashim. For this reason they were able to win the support of the Shiites, whose only saint, Hussein, was a grandson of Mahomet’s and thus also a Hashemite. Abu Moslem, an emissary of the House of Abbas, raised the black standard of that family in Khorasan and fanned the flames of Persian discontent against the Omayyads. The first Abbassid to take a hand in politics at first worked very quietly from a place in the country east of the Jordan and allowed the propaganda of his adherents to make its own way. The two parties were represented in Khorasan by the Omayyad Governor, a man

named Nasr, and Abu Moslem. Two hundred thousand men had already sworn allegiance to the emissary of the House of Abbas. Nasr realized the danger and in 748 sent a dispatch to Damascus in verse:

*I see amidst the embers the glow of fire, and it  
wants but little to burst into a blaze.  
And if the wise ones of the people quench it not  
its fuel will be corpses and skulls.  
Verily, fire is kindled by two sticks and  
verily words are the beginning of warfare.  
And I cry in amazement: 'Would that I knew  
whether the House of Omayya were awake or asleep!'*<sup>1</sup>

The House of Omayya was not asleep, but it no longer had the power to send the necessary reinforcements everywhere where dissatisfaction was rife, to Iraq and Khorasan and Palestine. Nasr was obliged to flee. In northern Mesopotamia, beside the river Zab, the opposing forces met and joined battle. Caliph Merwan himself appeared, and in order to encourage his troops he said that he had brought treasure with him to reward their courage. As a result one part of the army rushed towards the camp; others thought they were in flight and joined them. A panic resulted from the confusion. The whole army fled and thousands were drowned in the waters of the Zab. Merwan was slain. That was the end of the Omayyads in Asia. For Abbas, the victorious Caliph, invited ninety members of the family to a banquet. A poet rose up and declaimed verses recounting the misdeeds of the House of Omayya. The ninety were massacred, a carpet was spread over their bodies and the banquet proceeded. A single member of the family escaped, fled through Africa, reached Spain, and founded the Omayyad Caliphate of Cordova.

With the end of the Omayyads of Damascus came also the end of Arabic unity and of the unity of Islam. The Shiites were made to feel only too soon that the Abbassids who had exploited their dissatisfaction in the struggle against Damascus were not inclined to grant them any privileges. Risings in Basra, Kufa, and Medina were crushed. The Egyptians refused to recognize

<sup>1</sup> Sykes: *History of Persia*, Vol. I, p. 555.

the legitimacy of the Abbassid Caliphs; they established a Caliphate of their own under the Fatimid dynasty and conquered the land of Syria. The Persians, to whom the rule of the Abbassids—whose seat was near their own ancient capital, Ctesiphon—was a first step on the way to liberation, made themselves independent under several dynasties and only admitted the spiritual overlordship of the Abbassid Caliphs.

Nevertheless, the great days of the Abbassids in their newly founded capital, Baghdad, under the Caliphs el-Mansur and Haroun-al-Rashid and el-Mamun, were a final efflorescence of all the glories of the civilization of the East. Poets, philosophers, clowns, dancers, trainers of fighting cocks, streamed to the munificent Court, the only parallel to which is to be found in Byzantium. Pleasure trips might be taken on the Tigris in boats formed in the shape of various animals; one was like a dolphin, another like a lion, a third like an eagle. Each one cost three million dirhem. Goods from distant lands lay piled on the banks of the river—porcelain and silk and musk from China; spices, wrought metals and dyes from India; rubies, lapis lazuli, textiles and slaves from the land of the Turks in Central Asia; honey, wax, furs, and fair slaves from Scandinavia and Russia; ivory, gold-dust, and black slaves from East Africa; rice, grain, and linen from Egypt. Goods came overland in great caravans—glass, metal goods, and fruits from Syria; silks, perfumes, and vegetables from Persia. Baghdad money found its way as far as Germany, Sweden, Finland, and Russia. Jewellery, spices, mirrors, and glass beads were exported. In the *Arabian Nights* the commercial enterprises of Moslem merchants are described in the adventures of Sinbad the Sailor.

The treasures of the mind were in as great request as material wealth. The Arabs displayed an insatiable intellectual curiosity, a power of quick apprehension. The necessity for making the Koran accessible to new converts created a demand for translators and dictionaries. The literary works of the world were done into Arabic from Persian and Aramaic, from Sanskrit and Greek. Things that Greece had taken over and transmuted from Egypt, Babylonia, Phoenicia, and Judea, streamed back into the East in new form. Aristotle, the Commentaries of the Neo-Platonists, and the works of Galen became a part of Arabic

education. To the intellectual sciences were added the natural sciences—Arabian astronomy, Jewish and Arabian medicine.

One of the greatest of their learned men, who was at once a translator, a philosopher, and a physician, was Hunayn-ibn-Ishaq, a Nestorian Christian from el-Hirah. His incorruptibility was demonstrated when the Caliph Mutavakil commanded him, as Court physician, to prepare a deadly poison for use against an enemy. He refused. He was imprisoned for a year. Then he was brought before the Caliph and threatened with death. He said: 'My skill lies only in that which is wholesome. I have studied nothing else.' When he was pressed further to say what prevented his preparing the poison, he replied: 'Two things—my religion and my profession. My religion commands us to do good even to our enemies, and how much the more to our friends! My profession was established for the good of mankind and is restricted to healing. Moreover every physician is bound by oath never to administer any deadly drug.'

In matters of ceremony, of fashion, of administration, for which there was no Arabic tradition, educated people in Baghdad—who were so strongly under the influence of Greece in intellectual things—were almost wholly Persian. The mighty vizirs of the House of the Barmecides were of eastern Iranian origin. The Caliph Mamun was the son of a Persian slave-woman and was in Khorasan regarded as 'the son of our sister', that is to say, as a member of the family.

Thus the Arabic invasion not only brought the new God, Allah, and Mahomet, His Prophet, but also the last epitome of the old cultural tradition that held good from Africa to India, that despite the fact that it became somewhat rigid was nevertheless the only source of light in the intellectual darkness of the Middle Ages in Europe.

## SELJUKS, CRUSADERS, MONGOLS

The power of the Caliphs in Baghdad gradually declined to a shadow-rule. In the east, various small dynasties—the Saffarids and Samanids, the Ziyenids, the Buwayids and the Lords of Ghazna—arose in turn, sometimes overlapping with one another. In the north, Byzantium had one more period of rest

before the assault of the new religion. In the west a new dynasty arose, the Fatimid, which claimed to be descended from Mahomet's daughter Fatima. Their paternal ancestor, at all events, was a Persian eye doctor from Ahwaz named Abdulla-ibn-Maymun el-Kaddeh. He founded a secret society in which he planned to unite Arabs and Persians, Christians and Jews. He promised all things to all men—a Mahdi to the Moslems, a Messiah to the Jews, a contemplative life to philosophers, and freedom to fools. His grandson conquered a large part of north Africa and in 909 founded the first Shiite dynasty in Tunis. By 969 Egypt had been conquered and western Arabia added to the empire, including, therefore, control over the holy places of Islam. Towards the end of the century the Fatimids conquered the whole of Syria and established themselves in Damascus.

Thus at the time that a new attack was launched from the east, the former great empire was divided into a weak central section, a strong Power in the west, and in the east a series of principalities all fighting among themselves in Persia and amid the mountains of Afghanistan.

Invasions had frequently been made from central Asia by various tribes of Huns, but they had never led to a lasting occupation of the country. Now a Turkish tribe from Bokhara set out westwards. The leader of the tribe was called Tukak. Seljuk, the son of Tukak, was converted to Islam with his followers. Toghrul, a grandson of Tukak's, marched into Khorasan. From a distance, Toghrul was obviously not in a position to gauge who was really at the head of affairs in the vast western empire. Such princes as he met on the way he fought and defeated. These were tribal chiefs like himself, and he could feel no particular respect for them. On the other hand, his religion had taught him that the Caliph was the highest of all rulers. Hence, after having conquered the whole of Persia and divided it up among various members of his family, he paid a State visit to Baghdad and accepted the conquered territories from the Caliph in feoff. The ceremony has been described by Hammer-Purgstall:

The Caliph sat on his throne behind a black veil, clad in the black mantle of Mahomet, and holding in his hand the Prophet's staff as sceptre. After Toghrul had kissed the ground and then

stood upright for a time, he sat on another throne by the side of the Caliph. The attestation whereby the Caliph named him absolute representative, supreme governor of all the lands committed to his charge by God, and regent of all Moslems, was read aloud. He was clothed, one after another, in seven robes of honour. Seven slaves from the seven kingdoms of the Caliph were presented to him. On his head was placed a golden, musk-scented veil, and two fillets were bound around it [to represent the Arabic and Persian crowns]. Twice he kissed the hand of the Caliph. He was girt about with two swords as ruler of the East and of the West, and publicly proclaimed as such.

The Caliph was bestowing the insignia of territory that was no longer his. But the Seljuks occupied them without more ado. Toghrul proceeded northwards from Baghdad to the Caucasus. His nephew Alp Arslan, 'the Conquering Lion', conquered Herat and Transoxiana in the east; in Arabia he took Mecca from the Fatimids; in Asia Minor he defeated a superior Byzantine force in 1071, took the Emperor Diogenes Romanus prisoner and treated him with astonishing clemency. His son, Malik Shah, conquered Syria in 1086 and occupied part of Egypt. Bokhara and Samarkand were incorporated in his empire and the ruler of Kashgar recognized the sovereignty of the Seljuks. Malik Shah founded an observatory at Nishapur and was a passionate addict of the game of polo. His and his father's famous vizir was Nizam-ul-Mulk, whose financial system was so excellent that the boatmen on the Oxus were able to accept and convert into ready money bonds upon Antioch; and Persians were still using his system of book-keeping in the twentieth century.

The quarrels among four of Malik Shah's sons for the succession after his death resulted in civil war and oppression. The Seljuk empire was divided into five kingdoms—Fars, Kerman, Damascus, Aleppo, and Roum. The three last did not participate in the disorders within the Persian empire.

The Seljuks, as newly converted Moslems, behaved like all converts and were intolerant of those whose faith was different from their own. Pilgrims to the Holy Land were sufferers on this account. Moreover, at the beginning of the eleventh century a mad Caliph, Hakim Biamrillah, of whom we shall hear again,

ruled in Egypt. He caused the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem to be destroyed for a whim in the year 1009. These attacks on Christianity, coupled with the spirit of adventure and of commerce, urged on by the desire of the Papacy to have the Eastern Church under its sway, led to the second European invasion of Asia, called the Crusades. True, Byzantium was harassed by the Seljuks in Asia Minor, but it never dawned on the Emperor Alexius (despite what has been taught in schools) to appeal to the West for help. On the contrary. He was having quite enough trouble as it was with the Normans, who were making attempts on Albania from Italy. At most he wanted hireling mercenaries. He regarded everything Western with distrust. The first wild hordes that came under Peter the Hermit were only calculated to increase this distrust. The sole effort, therefore, of the Byzantine rulers was to keep the Occidental knights out of the capital, whether by means of bribes or by the use of force. What happened to them in the arid, mountainous regions of Asia Minor was their own affair.

Thus the curious situation arose that the last representative of the first European invasion had become so Orientalized that, like the Turks and the Arabs, he regarded the advent of the western Europeans as an invasion. It is true there was a kind of fellowship of Christianity, which was grudgingly admitted; and undoubtedly it was convenient that the warlike spirit of the Seljuks should be weakened by battles with the Crusaders. Nevertheless, there was a malicious satisfaction in seeing the western barbarians come to grief—for here in the East our 'parfit gentil' knights were looked upon as barbarians. They did not know how to behave, they greedily snatched at any presents that were given them, they stole relics, and had prostitutes dancing on the Greek altars. The first impression of the Arabs was: 'Animals, with the virtues of courage and the love of fighting, but nothing more.' (Usamah.) The Arabs were gentlemen. And the Byzantines were even more cultured, sensitive to every offence against good taste.

This, then, was the impression conveyed by the knights of the first definite expedition—by Raymond of Toulouse, Godfrey of Bouillon, Baldwin of Lorraine, Boemund of Tarentum, and his nephew Tancred the Norman. The mountains and the desola-

tion of Asia Minor, the diseases of the hot Cilician coast, the troops of the Seljuks, all pressed hard upon them. But they were brave men. They defeated the Sultan of Iconium and the Emir of Mosul, they captured Edessa and Antioch, and stormed Jerusalem in 1099. On this occasion they behaved exactly like all Asiatic conquerors and organized a frightful massacre of Moslems and Jews.

Even before the capture of Jerusalem the various lords had staked out claims along the coast—the official aim of the Crusades sometimes fell into oblivion. Tancred took Tarsus, Baldwin Edessa, Boemund Antioch, Raymond Tripoli. Finally a kingdom of Jerusalem was created, under Baldwin I. This was the end of the first phase.

The second phase brought disunion and jealousy among the knights and princes, an attempt on the part of the Emperor Alexius to compel by force of arms adherence to the oath of allegiance that had been taken to him, and the first counter-attack on the part of the Moslems. It also, however, brought a certain mutual understanding of each other's qualities among the opposing forces. The Syrians observed that though the 'Franks' had different customs they were not altogether barbarians. The Franks discovered that the Arabs did not worship idols, that their flowing robes were much more comfortable in the heat than European jerkins, that the pointed arches of Arabic architecture would also look well in Christian churches, that the effect of the juxtaposition of smooth-faced black stone with light stone was good. The models for Siena were found in Damascus and Aleppo.

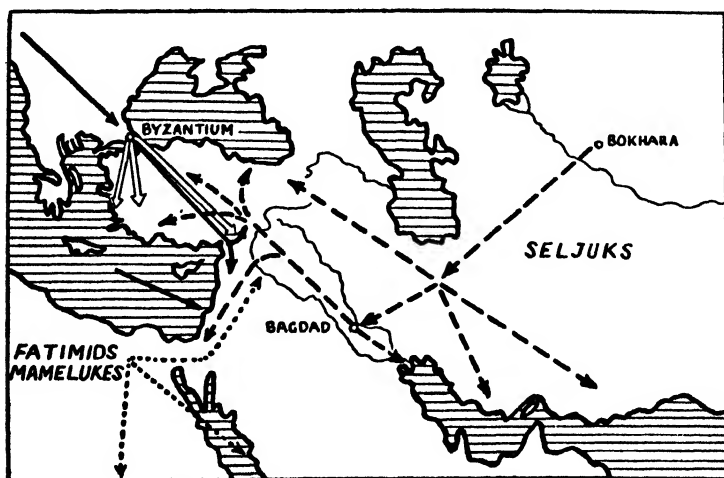
On the whole, Byzantium suffered more from the Crusaders than did the Islamic world. Jerusalem was lost again, and was not regained even during the third Crusade. On the other hand the fourth, intended originally for Egypt, was turned against Constantinople. The Greeks were driven out, a Latin empire was established under Baldwin of Flanders and lasted until 1251. By that time the crusading spirit had died down. From Nicea the Greek emperor Paleologus was able to re-enter Byzantium and to restore the old Byzantine traditions.

Underneath the turmoil of the Crusades, the immeasurable confusion and antagonism among princes and emperors, kings,



counts, and sultans, certain independent dominions arose on the borders of the Crusader States. There had been a Seljuk Sultan of Iconium from very early days. A member of the Danishmend tribe now challenged his authority. Between them, in Lesser Armenia, on the Cilician coast, was a prince named Thoros. He held the passes of the Taurus and the town of Zeitun. For a short time he occupied Tarsus and Adana. Again, in the Mosul district a former Turkish slave of Malik Shah, the blue-eyed Atabeg Zengi, had founded a little State of his own including the towns of Aleppo, Harran, and Mosul. He captured the strategically important town of el-Ruha from the Crusaders, and thereby did away with the Christian wedge that had been driven in between Syria and Iraq. His son Nur-ed-Din lived in Aleppo, on the citadel of which he built a mosque dedicated to Abraham. He occupied Damascus and deprived the Christians of certain properties in land.

The nephew of one of the leaders in Nur-ed-Din's army was Salah-ed-Din, known in Europe as Saladin. Saladin had two ambitions—to restore the Sunnite faith in Egypt, and to conduct a holy war against the Franks. He made himself master of Egypt. Then he did as Toghrul had done and had himself encoffed of Egypt, Morocco, Nubia, western Arabia, Palestine, and Syria by the Caliph in Baghdad. After this he proceeded against the Christians and captured Jerusalem in 1187.



SELJUKS, FATIMIDS AND CRUSADERS

The Christians, however, were still in possession of Antioch, Tyre, and Tripoli, and in 1192 they also captured the fortress of Acre. The House of Saladin grew mighty in Egypt; but later its strength waned and it was ousted by the Mamelukes. Not until the time of Qalawun, the fifth Mameluke prince, was the work of Saladin completed in the ejection of the Christians from Asia by the capture of Acre in 1293.

The Crusaders as representatives of Europe in the Middle Ages occupied only a very narrow margin on the edge of the Asiatic world and Syria, a land that has always been subject to alien masters. Nevertheless they, together with the Seljuks, brought a new factor into the Near Asian world—organized confessional hatred. Before their time occasional massacres and frequent exploitation or oppression of those whose faith was different had occurred. But this was less a matter of principle than of the personal whim of some particular ruler. From now on, however, wars were waged in the name of religion, wars not only between Christians and Moslems, but between the Roman Catholic Church and the Byzantine Greek Orthodox, between the Sunnite Saladin and the Shiite Fatimids. This principle of the extermination of men on account of their beliefs may seem to be forgotten in later ages for centuries at a time—but in moments of political tension it is liable to recur and to form the pretext for persecution and murder.

While in the Mediterranean area Christianity and Islam were still antagonists, a new Power arose in the East, the last great heathen Power that knew nothing of war for the sake of creeds. The aims of their warfare were much simpler. Jenghis Khan expressed it shortly and clearly: 'The greatest joy is to conquer one's enemies, to pursue them, to seize their property, to see their families in tears, to ride their horses, and to possess their daughters and wives.' (After Sykes: *History of Persia*.)

Jenghis Khan became leader of a Mongol tribe at the age of thirteen owing to the death of his father. At first the tribe refused to obey so young a lad. But the boy was strong and successful. First he subdued his own people, then northern China, then the kingdom of the men of Khowar, to whom had descended the legacy of the Seljuks in the east. He proceeded to central and

northern Persia and reached the upper Volga in south Russia.

Every time he purposed attacking a fresh kingdom he sent the following message: 'If you do not submit, how can we tell what will happen? God alone knows!'—an early and somewhat primitive form of refusal to accept responsibility for the consequences, that is to say for war-guilt. If the ruler in question chose to submit, he was made to pay a large sum of money and in addition to give up one-tenth of his property, including his subjects. As a rule, however, he did not submit but took to flight. And then the words of the *Tarikh-i-Jahan-Gusha* were fulfilled: 'They came, they uprooted, they burned, they slew, they carried off, they departed.' (After Sykes: *History of Persia*.)

Hitherto little mention has been made of the different forms of cruelty nor of the massacres in which the victorious conquerors indulged. Cruelty and murder are commonplaces in the East, and nowadays when, after a long period of humane-ness, rougher ways are coming into fashion again in certain parts of Europe, we have no right to be indignant over the butcheries of Asiatic antiquity. The forms have changed as in all things in life. The ancients are said to have flayed their victims alive. The Arabs claim to have ground their corn with the blood of the dead after their first great victory over the Persians. The Seljuks at the outset of their career had a habit of stuffing the mouths of captured enemies full of earth and pushing it down their throats with metal rods. The cutting off of heads as trophies was a matter of course.

It was all very sanguinary and terrible, but the peoples survived none the less. The Mongols, however, literally exterminated entire nations. In 1220 at Merv half a million people were killed, the inhabitants of the town as well as all who had fled there for shelter from the surrounding country. At Nishapur every living thing, including dogs and cats, was slain, great pyramids were built of the skulls—a Mongolian custom—buildings were razed to the ground, and barley was sown where once the city had stood. The above-quoted Persian historian of *Jahan-Gusha* says: 'If from now to the day of Judgement nothing hinders the growth of the population, it cannot reach one-tenth of the figure at which it stood before the Mongol invasion.' This may be an exaggeration, but Sir Percy Sykes, the twentieth-

century historian of Persia, also says that 'wherever the Mongols passed, the population was almost exterminated and the land reverted to desert'.<sup>1</sup> Persia did in fact recover after a few centuries had passed, but only because southern Persia was spared and formed a reserve of strength.

After the death of Jenghis Khan the immense empire was divided up among his sons. But one of them, Ogotay, was looked upon as chief, and further plans of conquest were made in consultation among them all. One army was sent against Russia, another against China, a third against Jelal-ud-Din, their only strong and successful opponent in eastern Persia, a fourth against Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Asia Minor. For the time being the expeditions into western Asia were no more than raids and implied no occupation of land. Hulagu Khan was the first to be ordered to Persia, with the command to exterminate the Assassins in the northern hills and to take Baghdad. Hulagu had learnt to enjoy other delights than those enumerated by Jenghis Khan. He therefore proceeded in leisurely fashion, and if the last of the Abbassid Caliphs, Mustasim Billah, had not been such a wretched weakling, the brilliant capital of Islam might perhaps have been saved. But as it was, he submitted. And Hulagu, the heathen, who had not the Seljuk Toghrul's reverence for the Commander of all the Moslems, had him put in a sack and trampled to death. Baghdad was given over to plunder for a week. Almost a million inhabitants were done to death, all the treasures of art, all the priceless books and scientific instruments were destroyed. Islam was stricken to the very core and never quite recovered from the blow. The Arabic language, which was as commonly in use among scientific men in Europe as the Latin, was once more reduced from a universal to a local tongue.

Hulagu was the founder of the Persian Mongolian dynasty. His successors slowly learnt the mode of life of the civilized world, and at the same time extended their territory, until at last they were defeated in Syria by the Mamelukes. These heathen Il-Khans perpetually fluctuated between Christianity and Islam. They received embassies from the Pope; they were in communication with Byzantium; and Mary, the Emperor's

<sup>1</sup> *History of Persia*, Vol. II, p. 84.

daughter who was on her way to be the bride of Hulagu when she heard of his death, became the wife of Hulagu's son. A successor to Hulagu named Ahmed was converted to Islam and was thereupon deposed by his indignant army and killed. A later one who inclined to Christianity came to a similar end.

At length, in the year 1295, Ghazan Khan officially adopted Islam. As a zealous convert, he immediately caused all Christian, Jewish, and heathen temples to be destroyed, until the King of Armenia intervened and induced him to limit his persecution to the heathens. Ghazan Khan defeated the Mamelukes in Syria and occupied Damascus, but did not hand over the city to be pillaged by his soldiers. He was in many ways a benefactor and a reformer. And since the conditions that he found existing in Persia continually recur up to the most recent times, it may not be out of place to give an account of his activities:

When Ghazan Khan came to the throne, he found the revenue so corruptly administered that practically nothing reached the central government, with the result that he was unable to give pay, much less presents, to his army. At the same time the peasantry were so ground down by illegal and semi-illegal exactions that they were deserting their villages, and whenever an official appeared they took refuge in underground hiding-places. To remove this fundamental abuse a survey of all property was instituted, and on this a new system of taxation was based, each village paying its taxes in two instalments and knowing exactly what the amount was. All assignments on revenue—a cause of endless corruption—and all other irregular taxes or tolls were forbidden on pain of death, and in order to prevent the tax collectors from deceiving the peasantry they were obliged to post a copy of the order, with details of its taxes, in every village. Another abuse was that all government officials and other great personages not only used the government post-horses but preyed on the country, quartering themselves and their large suites in the towns and villages, and taking everything they and their servants desired without payment. It had also become customary to send an enormous number of couriers to and from the Court, all of whom seized supplies and even transport when necessary, with the result that the population had disappeared from the vicinity of the main roads. This abuse Ghazan remedied, in the first place by instituting a private postal service of horses, which was not allowed to be used by any one except the monarch's special couriers. He subsequently abolished the old service, and by rigorously suppressing the use of couriers and by other means put an end to the extortions. He also

purified and organized the administration of justice, encouraged agriculture, founded military fiefs, set up a standard of weights and measures, and worked by every means for the prosperity of the downtrodden peasantry.<sup>1</sup>

All this happened less than a hundred years after Jenghis Khan had built his pyramid of skulls in the demolished cities—a proof of the great gifts of rulership possessed by these Mongolian nomads, whose successors for a long time to come represented the element of discipline amid the chaos of Persian history.

#### THE OTTOMANS AND THE PARTITION OF THE NEAR EAST

'Turks' existed in the Near East even in the days of the Romans. They came originally from that vast and indeterminate territory in central Asia that is called Turkestan on maps, that nowadays is officially divided between the Soviets and China, in which nomad tribes live to this day making war on one another and establishing little short-lived dominions, in which travellers—such as Sven Hedin, Filchner, and von der Gablenz—are lost or made prisoner, which von Hentig, another traveller, crossed during the World War although he was pursued by hostile raiders, and through which Peter Fleming and Kini Maillart, despite apparent levity, somehow managed to come safely.

When times were bad for the Turks in Turkestan, a tribe might emigrate and continue its nomadic life farther westward. Such tribes had taken up their abode in Khorasan and in Azerbaijan. One of them, the tribe of the Seljuks, established an empire over the whole of the East. A part of another tribe—the Oghuse—whose home was in Khorasan, fled before Jenghis Khan and his Mongolians to Asia Minor. As long as the Mongols were powerful nothing more was heard of these people, for it was wisest to be as inconspicuous as possible. After Jenghis Khan's death they felt they would like to return to their homes. They started on the return journey by way of Aleppo. But their chief was drowned in the Euphrates, and after this the tribe disintegrated. Some members of it continued their journey eastwards, some remained in Syria, and their descendants live a

<sup>1</sup> Sykes: *History of Persia*, Vol. II, p. 113.

nomadic life there to this day. And four hundred families proceeded towards Ararat, east of Erzerum. Their arrival there happened to coincide with a minor war. Their chief, the chivalrous Ertoghrul, knew nothing of the contending parties. He decided to help the weaker against the stronger; and thereby helped the Seljuk Sultan Salah-ed-Din to victory over a horde of Mongolians. The Sultan showed his gratitude by granting the gallant Turks pasturage, first in the neighbourhood of Angora and later near Yenishehir, not far from Bursa.

So they settled in these parts, at times waging war on behalf of the Seljuk Sultan, and at times undertaking minor expeditions on their own account if they chanced to covet some fine castle or a new piece of pasture land. They were surrounded mostly by Christians, for Bursa was still a juridical capital of the Byzantine empire. In those days frontiers were not fixed by Frontier Commissions, especially in the case of nomads, and these Turks were still purely nomadic. In the summer they went off to their pasturage.

In order to safeguard the property of the tribe, Ertoghrul came to a friendly arrangement with the Lord of Bildeshik (that is to say, a Byzantine rural governor) whereby the tribe's most valuable possessions were left for safe keeping in the castle before they went up into the mountains. The Lord of Bildeshik agreed to this on condition that the goods should never be brought in by armed men but only by women and children. The condition was punctiliously fulfilled, the property was faithfully guarded throughout the summer, and every time he returned from the mountains Osman brought the Lord of Bildeshik splendid carpets such as the Turks make to this day, heavy woollen cloths, goatskins filled with cheese and curds, and bottles of honey, in proof of the shepherds' gratitude. (Hammer-Purgstall.)

The Osman mentioned in this account was the son of Ertoghrul, who after further battles became first frontier captain, and was later distinguished by the Sultan with the insignia of princely dignity—banner, drum, and horse's tail. The name Osman means 'osprey'. Moreover the king vulture is called 'osprey', and the king vulture is the symbol of sovereignty and power throughout the East. This, however, was not the only sign that presaged the brilliant future that lay before Osman and his House. He had a dream wherein from his loins grew a

tree which overshadowed the whole world, including the four rivers, Tigris, Euphrates, Nile, and Ister, and wondrous cities with temples and cupolas and obelisks. The leaves of the tree were shaped like daggers, and a mighty wind arose, causing the leaves to dip in the direction of the cities, 'of the imperial city of Constantine first of all, the city that lies at the juncture of two seas and two continents, as it were a diamond set between two sapphires and two emeralds, the most precious jewel in the ring that represents a dominion embracing the whole world.' (Hammer-Purgstall.)

The first Osman was satisfied with conquering the surrounding castles, among them that of the tribe's erstwhile friend Bildeshik. He disguised himself and thirty-nine of his best warriors as old women, and instead of what purported to be the valuables to be left in trust he proceeded to the castle with forty horse-loads of arms. His son Urchan conquered the fortified city of Bursa, and caused his name to be carved on the wall of the famous Consiliar Church of Nicea. He founded the regiment of the Janissaries, proclaimed sumptuary laws, and established administrative machinery. Murad, the son of Urchan, took Adrianople and transferred the capital of the State to Europe. Murad's son, Bayazid I, had further great successes in the west, but a danger which he underrated arose in the east in the shape of a fresh Mongolian invasion—not an invasion by the civilized Mongolians of Persia, but the expedition of Timur Lenk (Tamerlane) who destroyed everything that lay in his path.

Bayazid who had been victorious everywhere except in the siege of Constantinople, could not imagine that he would be defeated by a barbarian chieftain. He therefore moved eastward and before battle was joined the exchange of insulting messages which was part of the etiquette of Asiatic warfare took place. Bayazid challenged Timur to appear before him, otherwise Timur's wives should be thrice divorced from him. He caused his own name to be written in gold letters above Timur's, in black, instead of upon the same line.

Timur was furious at such insults, outraging traditional customs in word and writing. 'The son of Murad is raving,' he said as he saw the mutilated *curalia* [Court handwriting] of the communica-



tion. But when he came to the passage speaking of the divorce of his wives his wrath knew no bounds, since such allusion to the harem, which no man has the right to mention to another, constitutes the greatest possible personal abuse. (Hammer-Purgstall.)

While Timur was sending secret messages to the Tartars in Bayazid's army prompting them to desert, Bayazid was so niggardly that there was great dissatisfaction in the Turkish army. Battle was joined at Angora. Bayazid was defeated and taken prisoner (1402).

Timur Lenk's victory might delay the rise of the House of Osman but it could not permanently prevent it. After Bayazid's capture and death the kingdom disintegrated, it is true. But Mahomet I (1413-21) succeeded in reuniting it. By Murad II's day it had recovered so much power that the last Byzantine emperor was obliged to ask his permission to accept the crown. Mahomet II fulfilled the picturesque dream of his ancestor and captured Constantinople in 1453. Thus the great-grandson of the shepherd Osman became an emperor.

It is characteristic of the new era that dawned with the demolition of Baghdad by the Mongols that the Osmanlis had one goal only—Constantinople. The earlier ones had always gone first to Mesopotamia, to Babel or Seleucia, to Ctesiphon or Baghdad. Now the key to the world lay on the border between Europe and Asia, and no longer in Asia itself. Hence the first expeditions with Europe as the main objective were undertaken with the purpose of encircling the imperial city. Not until it had fallen did the consolidation of power in the East begin.

Confused conditions prevailed there owing to the existence of a vast system of small States. This was due to the Seljuks, who had given any successful general a piece of land in feoff. The feoffs became small States. In the east, on the Persian frontier, for example, there was the dynasty of the White Ram and the dynasty of the Black Ram. They fought against the Persians and against the Osmanlis and against each other and proved very hard to suppress. There was the dynasty of the Karamans, founded in Cilicia by an Armenian, who were in command of the most important Cilician and north Syrian mountain passes. A hundred and fifty years of warfare were required to put these down. It was for this reason that a settle-

ment with the two great neighbouring States of Egypt and Persia was so long in coming.

The first causes of quarrel between the Osmanlis and the Mamelukes are indicative of the systematic nature of the Turkish expansion of power. Since the Caliphs had ceased to live in Baghdad, this city had lost its importance. Next to rise was the holy city of Mecca, the central point of Islam. Efforts were still being made to use the methods of 'peaceful penetration'. Mahomet II suggested that the water pipes and fountains along the pilgrim road to Mecca should be repaired at his expense. The Sultan in Cairo refused, because the pride of the Mamelukes would not permit him to allow the maintenance of pious institutions to go out of his hand. 'Rather let them perish,' he said.

Bayazid II, the successor to the great Mahomet, was concerned with more than questions of prestige. The Egyptians had given a friendly welcome to Djem, the dangerous Osmanli pretender to the throne; and along the frontiers, in the neighbourhood of Adana and Tarsus, they had occupied Turkish fortresses. War broke out and the Osmanlis were thrice defeated.

Then came Selim the Cruel, the Victorious. He defeated the Mamelukes in Syria; he defeated the Mamelukes in Egypt (1516); he organized the usual massacre in Cairo; he occupied the wonderful citadel above the city, which Saladin had built. He assumed the black mantle and the standards of the Prophet and made himself Caliph and lord of the Islamic world.

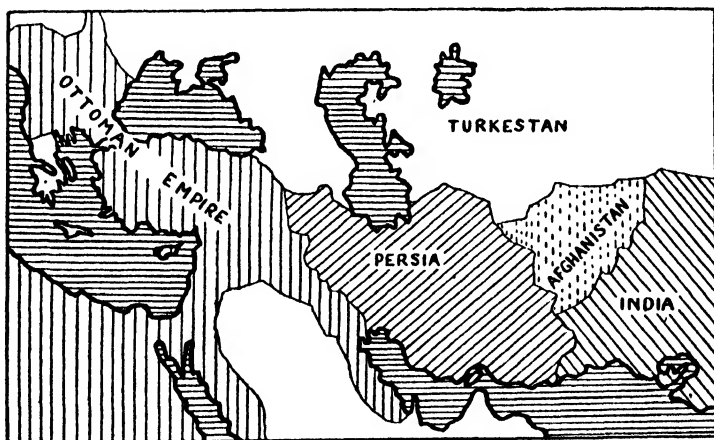
He was so modern in regard to the question of war-guilt, that he did not simply set out on an expedition because he felt like conquering fresh territory, but first had the justification for his campaign established by the fetva of a Mufti. The three questions he put before declaring war on Egypt were: 'If a Padishah of Islam is hindered in a holy war which he is waging in order to exterminate the godless (that is, the Persians) by the help given to these latter by another Padishah, is it lawful to slay that Padishah and to seize his property?'—The affirmative answer was based upon the proverb: 'Whosoever shall aid the ungodly is himself ungodly.' The second: 'If a nation bearing the name of Islam (the Egyptians) prefers to mate its children and its young men with the families of the heathen (the Circassians) rather than with Moslems, is it lawful to slay them?'—'Un-

doubtedly.' The third: 'If a nation, under the assumed pretext of doing honour to Islam, which it professes, causes the words of its creed to be stamped upon coins which it knows will come into the hands of Christians and Jews and seventy-two other sects, who—God forbid—take them into privies and carry these coins with them in their condition of uncleanness, and in case of need spend them, what is the right treatment to mete out to such people? The answer ran that if there were no help for it, it was justifiable to slay them.' (Hammer-Purgstall.)

The first question shows how the war against Egypt was brought into causal connection with the war against Persia. After the downfall of Timur's successors, the House of Safavi had slowly risen to power in Persia. It was descended from a pious sheikh of Gilan, on the shores of the Caspian, and traced its ancestry back to Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet. This was the second Shiite dynasty in the history of Islam. The House of Osman, on the other hand, was Sunnite. Selim entered upon the Persian war by causing spies to discover who were adherents of the Shia doctrines in the Turkish realm. All Shiites between the ages of seven and seventy were thereupon slain—some forty thousand of them.

The Turkish advance into the mountainous regions of the east proved arduous. The district was poor, and there was a lack of the means of subsistence. The soldiers were ready to mutiny. By way of punishment the vizirs were executed. As they approached the enemy the correct exchange of insulting messages took place. Selim sent Shah Ismael a monk's cowl, a stick, a tooth-pick, and a back-scratcher, in allusion to his descent from the family of a sheikh (i.e. a contemplative man). The Shah retorted with a box of opiates, for it was well known that Selim was addicted to the use of opium. The Sultan sent back a bundle of women's clothes with a contemptuous note. Then he advanced to the Ararat mountains, through the narrow defile guarded by the fortress of Maku, into the plain leading to Tabriz. Here battle was joined. The Turks were victorious. They proceeded to Tabriz. But the terrible heat of the sun and the bad food had impaired the strength of men and horses. After a week's occupation and pillaging of the town they began their homeward march.

This marks the turning point. Though Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent conquered Mesopotamia, including Baghdad, and Armenia with Tabriz, he never penetrated into Persia proper. Fighting continued for a long time and at frequent intervals, for the possession of Tabriz, of Kurdistan, of Luristan, that is to say of the frontier districts. But that was all. 'From the twelve contestants for throne and crown, the Empire of Osman emerged victorious over most of its enemies, and triumphantly took possession of their property . . . the Shereefs of Mecca and the Khans of the Crimea obeyed humbly, and the Persian alone remained on the scene of battle, in unimpaired strength to this very day, ready to fight heroically, sometimes victorious, sometimes defeated; but always rising up again after a downfall to pit his strength afresh against his neighbour and rival.' (Hammer-Purgstall.)



POLITICAL POSITION IN THE NEAR EAST  
FROM THE SIXTEENTH TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURIES

### STRAGGLERS AND FORERUNNERS

The Near Eastern stage was set and remained unchanged until the time of the World War. Any that came on to the scene during the next few centuries were stragglers or forerunners. Stragglers were the Afghans who made the last important invasion from the east, occupied Persia, set up the traditional pyramids of skulls, waged war against the neighbouring coun-

tries in the north and—being partly absorbed, partly driven out—disappeared again.

Forerunners were the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the English, who settled in the Persian Gulf; the enterprising commercial missions, that tried to 'open up' Persian trade; the English, Russian, and French military missions, which trained the Persian army. They were forerunners of European imperialist penetration that was systematically carried into effect during the nineteenth century and which must be regarded as the last European invasion.

What was the effect of the various waves of conquest and what did they leave behind? Two States remained, both Islamic, but professing hostile doctrines. One of them, Persia, may almost be regarded as a national State, although much time was yet to pass before all the different races that streamed into it were fully incorporated and assimilated. The Iranian race remained purest in Fars and in the mountains. To this day travellers may meet with country people there, wearing beautiful blue cotton shirts, their faces burnt a reddish and not a yellowish brown, their eyes blue or brown—types such as may be seen in Europe. In the south, in the coastal districts, a great admixture of Arabic has remained, in the north the Turkish element predominates. The centre is desert. And the townspeople are a mixture—not always a happy one.

The Ottoman empire, on the other hand, was a State of mixed nationalities, and one, moreover, including European as well as Asiatic components. Certain parts remained as they had always been—the Arabian peninsula, purely Arabic; Mesopotamia, Arabic intermixed with Persian on the foundation of an ancient civilization; Syria, a mixture of all the remaining constituents—Jewish, Phoenician, Assyrian, Greek, Roman, Arabic, Egyptian—a somewhat deplorable mixture. Possibly this is due less to the actual mixture than to the atmosphere in which it was carried out; to the situation of Syria as a corridor between two great Powers which never permitted the development of independence; to the mountainous nature of the country which fostered the development of taciturnity and stubbornness. Finally, Asia Minor proper, the land of the Turks. Roughly speaking, the Turks are Mongols. Benjamin von Tudela describes the Seljuks

in the following terms: 'They love the wind and the desert; they eat no bread and drink no wine; and since they have no noses they can only breathe through two small holes.' Any one visiting Asia Minor to-day finds that the inhabitants have very prominent noses indeed, and he very seldom sees the high cheek-bones of the Mongolian type. Everything left over from earlier days has obviously been amalgamated—the Hittites with Phrygians and Greeks, and these with the Romans; the Turks with all of them. The Arabs never came into the country except on short raiding expeditions. The Asia Minor 'blend' is excellent—it has produced peasants who to this day are horsemen and gentlemen. The Ottoman government in Constantinople was almost as foreign to these Anatolians as to the Arabs, Syrians, and Egyptians. But from Anatolia came the families of officials who were sent all over the great empire, who had the gift of government if not much else. Many of these families settled in the various districts and were to all intents and purposes assimilated. Even now, in the various national States, it will often happen that a foreigner remarks upon a particularly striking personality and is told by way of explanation: 'He is of Turkish descent.' Perhaps the superiority is due to the fact that the Turks were the last to enter the country. But also, perhaps, to the fact that they live in the severest climate.

## II

### CHURCHES, SECTS, TRIBES

*God is great! God is great!  
There is no God but God.  
Mahomet is the Prophet of the Lord.  
Come to prayer! Come to salvation!  
God is great! God is great!  
There is no God but God.*

(CALL TO MORNING PRAYER BY THE MUEZZIN FROM THE MINARET)

THE East is the home of the gods, of their prophets, of their religions. Ormuzd and Jahweh and Mithra, Zoroaster, Moses, Christ and Mahomet, Ali and Hussein, Paul and Simeon, all arose in Asia. The saints communed with their God in the tremendous solitudes of deserts and mountains, and returned from thence to preach and to lead men into the paths of righteousness. The people of the East have always been ready to accord a hearing to prophets, for in the midst of a malevolent universe no effort could be too great, no expedient too arduous, no sacrifice too costly, to placate and to modify the harshness of circumstance. Side by side with the various forms of faith arose also superstition, or what in the West is looked upon as superstition. Beware to compliment a parent upon his child—it will be in peril of the evil eye. Beware if a fiery comet should appear in the heavens—it bodes ill. A man who prays for recovery from an illness for himself or for another must make a vow, and in token of that vow tie a piece of his garment to a holy place, to a tree in the desert, to the iron fittings of a sacred door. If he loves his horse or his ass or his child, he must tie around its neck the bright blue beads that preserve it from misfortune.

Is this nothing but superstition? The western rationalist says yes. But let that western rationalist go to the East and his rationalism will be riddled with holes. He will learn to admit

the power of the inadmissible and to bow to it. When he returns home his friends will say: 'Your eyes are quite different—you look like a Buddhist.' And he himself will wonder at the self-assurance with which his friends make and carry out their plans—until he becomes one of them again and forgets, before any important decision or undertaking, to lay his hand upon the bead that is to preserve him from evil. In the East he would never venture to think 'the bead that is to bring him luck'—that would be tempting fate too far.

The experiences of a journey may serve as an example of how such a state of mind comes into being. At Istanbul we had barely noticed the blue beads round the horses' necks. We had liked them, we had enjoyed the unusual colour-effect of the bright azure upon the dark hide of horse or ass. We knew that the wearing of these beads was a local superstition, to give protection against misfortune, against sickness and accident, against the evil eye. After a six days' trip through north-western Anatolia, after sticking in the mud, traversing rivers in flood, after finding that for no reason at all primus stoves and atomizers would suddenly fail only to resume their normal functions equally inexplicably, the question began to form in our minds whether blue beads might not be useful to us too. The friend who accompanied the present author, an incorrigible rationalist, only laughed. All phenomena, according to her, are due to the operation of cause and effect.

A European friend in Angora, on the other hand, was ready to admit that this part of the world is under the rule of another God than ours, an unfathomable, a capricious God. No doubt the Gods of Christendom and Islam were closely akin originally. But in the West so many waves of enlightenment and reason have swept over the God of the Christians, beginning as far back as the Middle Ages, and since then more and more intensively, through humanism, science, and discoveries, that from century to century He has become increasingly rationalized. Nowadays His strength lies no longer in miracles but in the Law. And His prophets do not shrink from Darwinism or Socialism. The Eastern God, however, has kept His ancient vigour, His capacity to provoke the unexpected, the unnatural—earthquakes and floods, epidemics, deliverance, miracles,



And the reply of the peoples to the irrational is to submit to the unfathomableness of destiny. We are accustomed to call this mental attitude fatalism. In many of the countries of the Near East a strong attack is being made upon it as well as upon the God who generated it. In Turkey and in Iran this is being done systematically by the government. In Syria the attack is being carried out less by direct action than by the spread of technical knowledge—by motor-cars and smooth shining asphalt roads, by wireless and the doctrine that nations can mould their own fate, by cinemas which show that everything happens according to the laws of cause and effect.

Nevertheless the dethronement of Allah, or rather His Westernization, His rationalization, is a slow process. It may already have come to pass in the great cities, but in the countryside He reigns as always. Man and the works of man—roads and railways and bridges, canals and ditches, tractors, telegraph poles, and factories—are still too puny amid the vastness of steppes and mountains, the reddish-brown hills of the desert and the brilliant, dazzling, flat sandy wilderness. The eye may follow a line of telegraph poles for miles, as it stretches desolate and forlorn through an uninhabited land, up hill and down dale, with never a dwelling to lend it support. Not yet is it dominant; it is merely tolerated. A high-powered aeroplane lands at Adana in the spring, with an English earl on board. Two hours later there is a heavy fall of rain. The landing ground is turned into a marsh. The high-powered aeroplane is immovable for many days. Despite its power, it is utterly helpless, and no efforts on the part of the authorities can do anything. Once more the greater God is victorious—victorious over engines and the earthly powers of man. And as long as He continues to win a victory from time to time, as long as He counteracts the workings of western laws by the force of circumstances, so long will faith in miracles persist; faith in means to placate Him, to deflect ill fate. Hence the power of the blue beads.

At Angora it seems impossible to believe all this. Faith in one's own intelligence still persists, in the power to combat awkward circumstances with one's own weapons. Not until the Asiatic God has won many victories is his full power evident. Nevertheless, the feeling is dawning that it is advisable to keep

Him well disposed. We ask our friends to provide blue beads. 'Nothing easier,' they say, 'every hawker has them for sale.' However, it turns out to be not so easy. Perhaps faith in their efficacy has already died out in Angora, a city born of the force of a single human will, a well-planned, triumphantly modern metropolis. But then the lack of beads opens the gate to every sort of misfortune on the farther journey. At Aleppo the power of the eastern God is evident. At Beirout he sends a sickness in order to make it still plainer. By the time Baghdad and Teheran are reached plans for the future are no longer made and determined upon, but only hoped for. But back in Istanbul, the most western of Asiatic cities, standing upon European soil, in Istanbul, where the first blue beads had been noted as Oriental 'curios', the history of the power of the eastern God upon western minds is brought to a definite conclusion. A European Consul-General tells the story of his first car which, not being yet aware of the Powers, he had ventured to take out without blue beads. It broke down the first time he drove it. The reason was patent—there was something wrong with the tyres. The second time it stopped again—on the way to a parade, moreover—belching fumes. This time there was no obvious reason. Thereafter the car was provided with blue beads. And since then it has never stopped except when it should do so. In the course of this tale another western European, an admiral, who had sunk numbers of ships during the War by the precision of his engines and guns, lovingly and tenderly drew a bunch of keys from his pocket, and to it, in company with other wonder-working objects, was attached a large blue bead.

Other Europeans believe themselves to have found the power and exigency of the gods in other sources. The cruelty and indifference with which her Persian guide leaves a sick man to his fate by the roadside provokes Freya Stark to the following passage:

The great religious leaders have all come from Asia: it is the more spiritual continent, we are fond of saying. But perhaps it is also because the woes of mankind are here so much more evident; the need for reliance on something more universal than human charity is so much greater; and the deep and tender hearts of the

prophets are more inevitably awakened by the sight of human suffering.<sup>1</sup>

Mention has been made of the early kinship between the God of Christendom and the God of Islam. This relationship is still operative in the East. Moses, his springs and his mountains, are held in just as much reverence by Moslems as by Christians. The Archangel Gabriel is the intermediary between Allah and Mahomet. The Koran says: 'The Messiah Jesus is the emissary of God and His Word laid in the bosom of Mary the Immaculate.' A mountain is dedicated to King Solomon in northern Persia—Takhut-i-Suleiman—one of the grandest mountains in the Elbruz range between Teheran and the Caspian Sea. A legend attaches to this mountain. King Solomon married the Queen of Sheba, but failed to induce her to give him her love. He was old and she was young. All his efforts were in vain. At last he sent out the birds of the air to seek the coldest spot in the world for him. Next morning at dawn they returned, all save the hoopoe which was missing all day. As evening approached he also returned, did obeisance before the king and explained why he was so late. He had found a peak so cold that his wings froze to the ground and he was obliged to wait until the midday sun came to thaw them. On the top of this mountain King Solomon caused his couch to be erected and went there with the queen. The night grew colder and colder, until at last she could bear it no longer and crept into her husband's tent. In the morning King Solomon struck the side of the rock and a warm spring gushed out so that she might bathe in it. (After Freya Stark.)

'Sitti Mariam', the Blessed Virgin Mary, is revered by Moslems as by Catholics. Mahomet upbraids the Jews most gravely because they throw doubts upon the virginity of Mary. Saladin prostrated himself before her shrine at the monastery of Sydraya, praying for victory over the Crusaders—heretics—whose pretension it was that they came to deliver the Saracen Maiden revered by him and his fellow countrymen. After he had recaptured the city of Jerusalem and had rebuilt its fortifications, he named the finest of the gates 'The Gate of Sitti

<sup>1</sup> Freya Stark: *Valley of the Assassins*, p. 333.

Mariam', and so it is called to this day, though not by the Christians.

On the other hand, Christians have also made pilgrimages to the holy places of Islam. The venerable Ayyub el Ansari, standard-bearer to Mahomet, took part in the Arab siege of Constantinople in the year 668. He died of dysentery and was buried outside the gates of the city. His tomb became a place of pilgrimage for Greek Christians, who were in the habit of praying at this spot for rain in times of drought. In 1453, at the siege of Constantinople by the Turks, the grave was rediscovered owing to the emanation of mysterious rays of light and a mosque was built on the site. Thus a son of Medina came to be regarded as a saint by three nations—Arabs, Greeks, and Turks—who have always been at enmity with one another.

All these things held in common—the community of suffering under inscrutable fate, the community of the hostility of puissant Nature, the family likeness between various gods and saints—must not be forgotten in considering the schisms and discords, the zeal and battle-fury of prophets and their followers. They are all parts of a single whole, just as are the snowy chill of the mountain of Solomon and the southern Arabian ardour of his Queen of Sheba.

In so far as the cult of Mithra, the secret beliefs of the Manichaeans, and the doctrines of Zoroaster—largely because they discourage ascetism, celibacy, fasting—may still be said to have some influence in the East, they have been absorbed into present-day religions and cults. In the present work, however, it will only be possible to deal with those religions and confessions which have survived to modern times, which have been and still are a motive power in politics—that is to say, Christianity and Islam. Jewry too is still living, as the subject and object of political action. Nevertheless the Jews have always, from the earliest days, played a characteristic and quite unambiguous part. In their case, contrary to that of Christians and Moslems, religion and race are one. The Jews have no desire for conversion; they believe themselves to be a Chosen People. They alone have withstood all efforts at Hellenization, even when they have had to pay for their resistance in blood. Under the rule of Islam they have generally been lumped

together with Christians. Jews and Christians have been subject to certain taxes; Jews and Christians have at times been made to wear a particular costume. Nevertheless, something divides Jews from Christians, at all events from some sections of the Christians. The Jews have a particular talent for business, for making and accumulating money. Thus it seems as though they were treated by their Moslem rulers rather like a beehive. At certain times the hive is cleared—in this case gold and notes and precious stones take the place of honey—and then it is left in peace again, while the industrious bees return unwearying, though lamenting, to their work. In Egypt the Jews share this role with the Copts—the local name for Monophysite Christians—in Asia with Christian Greeks and Armenians. And eastern proverbs leave no doubt that the Armenians are first, the Greeks second, and the Jews only third in astuteness when it comes to cozening a man over business.

#### THE CHRISTIANS AND THEIR CHURCHES

‘If you go into a shop in Constantinople to buy a loaf of bread, the baker, instead of telling you the price, announces that the Father is greater than the Son. The money-changer will speak of the Incarnate and the non-Incarnate, instead of giving you your change. And if you go to the public baths, the keeper will assure you that without any doubt the Son proceeds from nothingness.’ Thus St. Gregory of Nazianzus. ‘Is Christ a man or did He only take on the semblance of man?’ was the subject of argument of the man in the street of the fourth century. ‘Is the nature of Christ single or dual?’ was his debate in the fifth century. The man in the street in the seventh century asked: ‘Has He one Will or two?’ For in those days the man in the street was a metaphysician, in Antioch as in Alexandria, in Ephesus as in Constantinople. Furthermore he was a politician. As such he deplored the idea that his religion should no longer be a matter of free faith but an instrument of Byzantine State policy. The Emperor intervened in the proceedings of the Councils until they did as he wished. The Emperor appointed and dismissed Patriarchs; the Patriarchs were State employees. Moreover this State—Byzantium—was

European, the descendant of Alexander, the last invader of Asia, and represented European domination; Christianity is Asiatic.

Politics and metaphysics combined to cause the schisms in the Church. They did not always go hand in hand, though always along parallel lines. The so-called popular Churches split off. They were called 'autocephalous' because they each had their own head on earth, while their true and supreme head was only and solely Jesus Christ. The Patriarch of Antioch never dreamed of recognizing the authority of the Patriarch of 'New Rome'. The Patriarchate of Antioch was both the oldest and the most deeply venerated; it reached from the Euphrates to Egypt and contained two hundred and twenty Syrian bishoprics. The Patriarchates of Jerusalem and Sinai broke away. The distant lands of Armenia and Georgia made themselves independent. So far this was a perfectly normal development within a great oecumenical Church—for up to this time the split between Rome and Byzantium had not taken place, although much bickering went on between them.

The controversies became serious only with the introduction into them of metaphysics. The first schism was a result of the Council of Ephesus (431). On this occasion Cyril of Alexandria disputed with Nestorius, and Nestorius was declared a heretic. This did not prevent great numbers of people from accepting his doctrine. At Edessa was one of the most famous of Asiatic schools of theology, containing students from both Syria and Mesopotamia. It professed and taught Nestorian Christology. The Emperor Zeno refused to tolerate this and closed the school. Teachers and students declined to renounce their faith and betook themselves to Seleucia in the Persian empire. A synod established a new 'Eastern' Patriarchate, that of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, sometimes called Babylon in later times.

It must not be supposed that this was no more than a small isolated fragment of a Church on the edge of Christendom. The Eastern Syrian or Nestorian Church was the greatest missionary Church of its day. Its influence stretched to northern Arabia, to Tibet, India, and China. In the year 987, for example, Ferishtah, the author of the oldest Arabic history of literature, met at Baghdad in the Nestorian Patriarchate a Christian priest

of south Arabian origin, who had seven years earlier gone to China with five colleagues. And this was at the time when Islam was at its most flourishing in Baghdad.

The Eastern Syrian Church did not remain united. It split into two parts—that of the Mar Simun with the Nestorians of the mountains, and that of the Mar Elias with the Nestorians of the Mesopotamian plains. Under the name of 'Assyrians', they took part in the World War as esteemed allies to the English.

Ebedjesu, an adherent of the Eastern Syrian Church, has made the points of contention almost comprehensible even for non-metaphysicians:

The Eastern Christians, who never changed their faith but kept it pure as they had received it from the Apostles are improperly called 'Nestorians'; for Nestorius was not their Patriarch, nor indeed did they understand his words. But they heard that he taught the doctrine of the dual nature and dual personality, and of Christ the only Son of God, and professed the orthodox faith. Therefore they supported him, because they themselves cherished the same faith. Thus Nestorius was their follower and not they his, most especially in the appellation of the 'Mother of God' (the 'Nestorians' refuse most vehemently the Syrian formula 'Generatrix of God' because they dislike the idea of the physical fact of parturition in connection with the Virgin). When they were thereupon challenged to excommunicate Nestorius, they refused, in the conviction that to excommunicate Nestorius would be equivalent to excommunicating the Holy Scriptures from which they had received their faith. (After Heiler.)

The next Council that led to a schism was that of Chalcedon in the year 451. On this occasion the disputants were Monophysites and Diophysites. The former were declared to be heretics. Feelings ran high as the discussion proceeded.

In the church of St. Euphemia at Chalcedon there were gathered all the forces which were henceforward to divide the Christian world. The rival forces of Egypt and the East shouted defiance and abuse at one another from either side of the nave, while the great officers of the Empire, seated in front of the chancel rails, with the Roman legates by their side, impassively dominated the turbulent assembly and guided it with inflexible persistence towards a final decision in accordance with the wishes of the Emperor and the Pope. This decision was not reached without a

struggle. In fact, it was not until the Roman legates had demanded that they should be given their passports and that a new council should be summoned in the west, and the Emperor had supported their ultimatum, that the majority was brought to accept the Western definition of the two natures of Christ in one person.<sup>1</sup>

The doctrine of the Monophysites seemed to the Byzantine Emperors to be much more dangerous than that of Nestorius. For it found foothold not merely in an outlying sector of the great empire but in its richest provinces—Egypt and Syria. Jacobus Baradai, a pupil of Severus, the first Monophysite Patriarch, established bishoprics and gained new converts. The whole Asiatic world appeared to be about to adopt the new doctrine. The Emperor Zeno, the same who had been content in the case of the Nestorians to close their school, attempted to win over the Jacobites (as they were called after Baradai) by suggesting a compromise. For only with the unity of the Church was the unity of the empire to be preserved. Hence Zeno put forward a formula, the Henotikon, which simply omitted the controversial phrases. He only made matters worse. For there were some who assented to the Henotikon—certain of the Armenians amongst them—though the majority remained Jacobite.

The Emperor Justinian's wife, the beautiful Theodora who had once been an actress and circus performer, was, unlike her husband, a Monophysite. And while the Emperor did his severe best to suppress the heresy throughout his realm, Theodora was the means of establishing a new Monophysite chair of theology at Alexandria. Later the valiant Emperor Heraclius, who inspired his followers from Constantinople with religious ardour and by their help conquered the Persians, attempted to find a new formula in which he ascribed to Christ a single instead of a dual Will. Still another new religious sect arose as a result—the Monotheletes. They were attacked relentlessly by the Syrian Jacobites, and before this sanguinary persecution a small company of Monotheletes withdrew to the mountains of Lebanon. They called themselves Maronites, and their descendants are now the only group of people in Syria upon whom the

<sup>1</sup> C. Dawson: *The Making of Europe*, pp. 128-9.



French are able to rely in their capacity as a mandatory Power.

This would seem to be almost enough. But it was by no means all. The Eastern Church, under the name of Greek Orthodox, seceded from the Catholic Church of Rome. And all at once it became apparent that the same Western Church of Rome which had been so fanatically anti-Monophysite, in Chalcedon, now discovered that the differences between Rome and the Asiatic Churches were not so very fundamental after all. For now the man in the street was no longer a metaphysician. The Mongols under Tamerlane had killed off Christians indifferently with Persians and Arabs. Up to a point the Seljuks and the Osmanlis had followed their example. The desire for religious independence had weakened under so much oppression. Hence 'unification' took place. The various Churches—and there were many more than have been mentioned—were permitted to preserve their own liturgies and languages—Aramaic (i.e. ancient Syrian), modern Syrian, Greek, Armenian, and Egyptian. But they were asked to submit to the supreme authority of the Pope. This occasioned still another split, between those who agreed to unification and those who remained faithful to the old doctrine. Thus from now onward there were two of everything—united Catholic Armenians and Monophysite Armenians; united Nestorians, called Syro-Chaldeans, and true Nestorians or Assyrians; and so on, and so on.

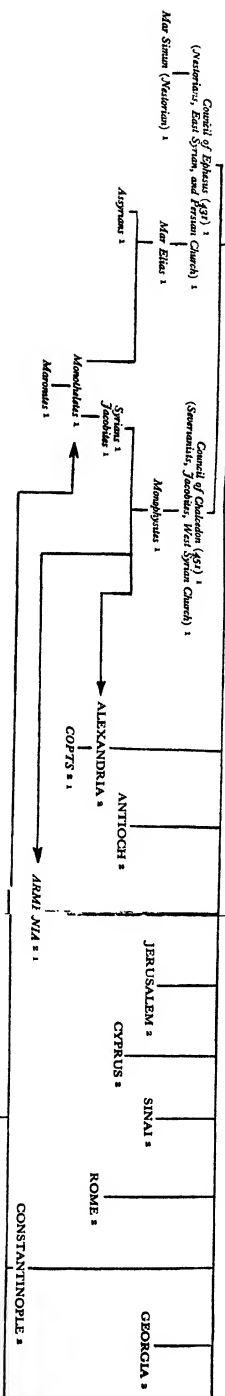
All this is not simply meaningless hair-splitting. True, the man in the street is no longer a metaphysician. Nowadays it is a matter of indifference to him whether the Person of God is single or dual. But the hatred has been handed down unimpaired. The European, realizing nothing of this, may prove it by engaging a cook and a housemaid in Aleppo or Baghdad—one an Armenian, the other an Assyrian. They will quarrel, they will come to blows. And the mistress of the house will be just as incapable of establishing peace between them as were in their day the Emperors Zeno and Heraclius.

The disunion of Christians in the East is an elementary fact. No form of danger will bring them together. On the very day before the fall of Constantinople the dispute was raging for and against union with Rome.

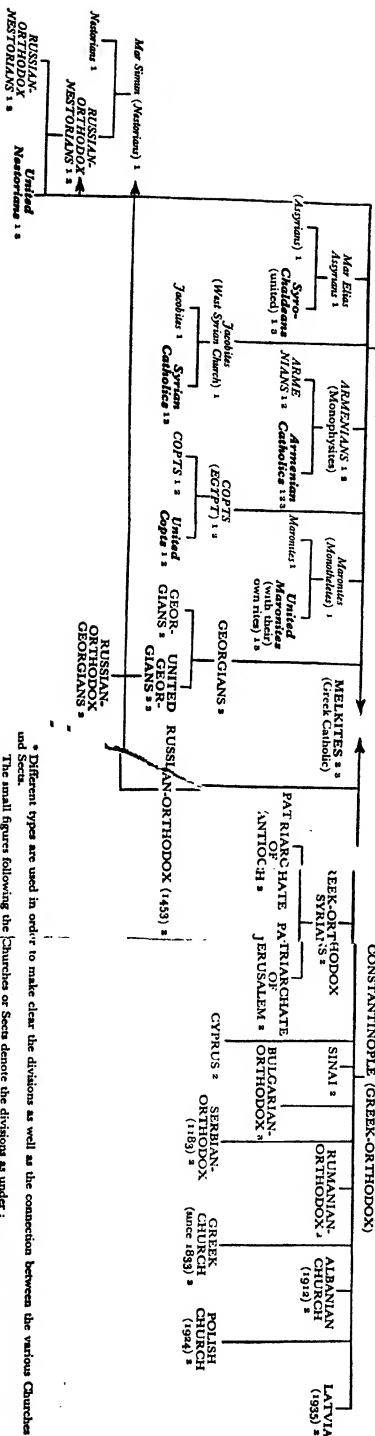


**I. At the time of the Oecumenical Church (up to 1045)**

CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO NATIONALITY



**Rome (Catholic) 3**



\* Different types are used in order to make clear the divisions as well as the connection between the various Churches and Sects.

The small figures following the Churches or Sects denote the divisions as under :

## 1 Being Dogmatic.

### 3 Being Autocephalic.

**3 Being Roman Catholic**



If an angel had actually come down to earth from heaven at this moment, and had proclaimed: 'Agree to the union of the Churches, and the foe shall be driven from your city,' they would still not have resigned themselves to the idea and would rather have been delivered over to the Turks than to the Church of Rome. (Ducas.)

The disunion among the Christian sects made life easier for them in their non-Christian surroundings. The Sassanian Yezdigird recognized the Christians as a 'millet'—a nation—in the year 409, with the right to practise their religion freely. Ormuzd, the son of the great Noshirwan, when urged to persecute the Christians replied. 'My throne rests upon four supports and not upon two, upon the Jews and Christians just as upon the Zoroastrians.' Khusru Parwiz, the King of Persia (590–628) whose marriage with the beautiful Christian Shirin has been the subject of many picturesque tales, built churches and convents and obliged the Christians in the conquered parts of Byzantium to adopt the Nestorian teaching.

One thing, however, remained constant at all times. As soon as any alien Power used the support of some national or religious minority as a political weapon, that minority began to suffer. In a letter to Shahpur the Emperor Constantine proclaimed himself protector of the Christians in Persia. Immediately the Christians were persecuted. The resultant discontent was treated as high treason, and the knowledge that in their hearts the Christians rejoiced at every victory of the Roman Empire infuriated Shahpur, the King of Persia. He commanded that Christians should pay double taxes for war purposes. The Mar Simun, who was charged with collecting the tax, refused. He said that the people were too poor, and moreover that he was not a tax collector but a Prince of the Church. The Mar Simun, together with five bishops and a hundred priests, was executed at Susa. Churches were demolished, monks and nuns persecuted. Nearly a hundred years later the Christians were again fleeing over the borders into the Roman Empire from the cruelty of the persecution. This was the cause of another Perso-Roman war. Even the Christian Abyssinians far away in Africa were incited by the Byzantine Government at the beginning of the sixth century to rouse the Arabs against the Persians. The

result was that Christianity was eradicated in southern Arabia by the Persian King Noshirwan.

Islam divides men into Moslems, heathens, and 'dhimmis'. Dhimmis are those who belong to sects with a revealed religion—Christians, Jews, Sabaeans, Zoroastrians. They are recognized as religious bodies. Nevertheless every dynasty of Caliphs produced an opponent of Christendom. Among the Omayyads it was Omar II, among the Abbassids the Caliph Mutavakil, among the Fatimids the mad Hakim. To this day their decrees are of interest. Under Omar II Christians were forbidden to occupy public offices, to wear turbans, to wear a forelock, to use a saddle for riding, to build churches, to raise their voices during the hours of prayer. They were obliged to wear a special dress with a leather belt, and their word was not accepted in a Moslem court of justice. The Caliph Mutavakil submitted Jews and Christians to the same decrees. They must paint the devil on their doorposts, pay special taxes, wear clothes of a dirty yellow colour, and their children were not permitted to learn the Arabic language. The Egyptian Fatimid Caliph Hakim Biamrillah drew fine distinctions between Jews and Christians. Christians were obliged to wear a crucifix round their necks at the baths, the Jews, on the other hand, the effigy of a calf. Both were obliged to wear black garments and were only allowed to ride donkeys.

The Mongols, it is true, killed anything and everything that offended them in their path, but they were in no sense inimical to Christians as such. Hulagu's wife was a Christian. His son married a Byzantine princess. Ghazan Khan was supposed by the European Powers to be secretly a Christian. And Arghun was prepared to join forces with the Christians against the Moslems. The fall of Acre, however, put an end to these plans and to the Christian rule in Syria.

The Osmanlis, as has been seen, were on good terms with their Christian neighbours. They fought against Byzantium because it was a great Power and stood in their way. They plundered Constantinople, not because of any hostility to Christianity but sheerly for love of plunder. Ducas gives an excellent description of the extraordinary mixture of booty that was carried home on the heavily laden ships:

Rich clothing, vessels of gold and silver, bronze and tin, innumerable books, prisoners, priests and laymen, monks and nuns. . . . In the midst of the barbarians might be seen one wearing an archiepiscopal robe, another leading a brace of dogs on a golden belt, and another using as a saddle-cloth a fleece interwoven with gold. Others used the sacred pattens as plates from which to eat fruit and the chalices as wine-cups. Thousands of books were laden on to carts and transported in all directions. A single coin would buy ten volumes of Aristotle and Plato, of theology and all manner of other books. The wonderfully rich gold and silver ornamentations were torn from the Bibles, the metal was sold and the books themselves thrown away. All pictures were burnt and food was cooked over the resultant fires.

This last act—the destruction of effigies—was the only one in the whole series which may be said to be founded on any principle of the Islamic faith.

Even while the sack was in progress, however, Mahomet II, the conqueror, caused the appointment of a new Patriarch to be proclaimed. He received the newly made Patriarch with great honour, presented him with a rich sceptre and commanded that all the notables of the Court should accompany him to the synod of the Patriarchate. Thus was the Osmanli tradition of toleration introduced. The Turks, needless to say, also had their anti-Christian Sultans. Selim, for example, the conqueror of Egypt, proposed to follow up the extermination of the Shiites with an equally thorough extermination of the Christians. The Mufti dissuaded him, referring him to the Koran and the promises of his predecessors.

Persecutions of the Christians in Turkey were, like those in the Sassanian kingdom, the result rather of foreign intervention than of religious fanaticism. In the middle of the nineteenth century, for instance, the Druzes attacked the Maronites of Lebanon and massacred them by thousands. Primarily this was a private affair between two hostile mountain tribes; the Druzes are not even recognized Moslems. But France, who has adopted the role of Constantine as protector of the Christians in the East, marched into Syria in order to give help to its brothers in the Faith. The European Powers enforced a special statute of autonomy for the Christians of Lebanon. Is it surprising that

as a result these Christians did not gain in popularity among the Turks?

Mention will be made of Turkish cruelties to Armenians and Assyrians in the following pages. But it is only fair first to quote an opinion upon the part played by the Christians in Turkey. In 1922, at a time when England could not find words bad enough to apply to the Turks, Sir Graham Bower said:

Mahomet II (*by recognizing the Patriarchate*) . . . practically set up an *imperium in imperio*; he gave the Greeks full freedom of religion, and he did the same with others, and the Turks have done the same to every ecclesiastical authority—to the Bulgarian Exarch, to the Armenian Catholicos—to everybody, in fact, at the head of a religion in Turkey. . . . The Turk granted an autonomy to each of the races of the people. . . . Who have been the prosperous people in Turkey? Who have made fortunes in Turkey? The Greeks, the Armenians, the Jews, the Christians; the Turk has not made much of a fortune. It is true that he fails alike as a merchant, as a financier, and as a politician; and anybody acquainted with Eastern finance would not be disposed to blame the Turk very much if he fails to compete in Eastern finance or Eastern politics with the various practitioners of those pursuits.<sup>1</sup>

The Turkish practice of religious and racial tolerance has been carried on by the English and French in the mandated territory that they took over from the former Turkish empire. That is to say that in principle, if not always in practice, the same treatment has been meted out to Christians ever since the days of the Persian empire of the first Christian centuries.

### THE ARMENIANS

Nowadays the 'Armenian question' resolves itself into the question of what to do with two hundred thousand emigrants. Only a few of them have found a home in Syria. The rest are 'not desired'. In the summer of 1938 the Greek Government declared expressly that the Armenians living in Greece could not be assimilated.

Twenty years ago the Armenian question was how to fix the boundaries of the new Armenian State. Russia was in process

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of the Central Asian Society*, Vol. IX., 1922.



of dissolution, Turkey had been beaten, northern Persia was occupied by Russian and English troops. There seemed nothing to prevent the union of the Armenian districts in Persia, Russia, and Turkey into a single large State. Before the World War there were two sides to the Armenian question. One that concerned the Concert of European Powers, who wondered how their anxiety over the sorrows of the Armenians might be used as a means of bringing pressure to bear upon the Sublime Porte; and the other that concerned the Turkish Government, who wondered how they might evade fulfilment of the promises made to the Great Powers on behalf of the Armenians. Fifteen hundred, seventeen hundred years ago, the Armenian question was the cause of all the wars between Persia and Rome.

Who and what are these much disputed people, the Armenians? The reply is nearly always coloured by strong feeling. 'Underhand and ungrateful' is one answer. 'Honourable, peaceable, lovers of justice' is another. We shall endeavour to confine ourselves to facts. In the seventh century before Christ an Aryan race from the west migrated into the hilly country round about Mount Ararat and Lake Van, and farther south as far as the district now known as Diar Bekir. They called themselves 'Haikh', that is to say 'lords'. The Medes, who first came to know one of their border tribes, called the whole race after this tribe—Armenians. The country was rough, more suitable for cattle breeding than for tillage.

Geographically the fate of the Armenians has been much like that of the Syrians. They lie on the road between two great domains, between Asia Minor and Iran, on the land route from Constantinople to Central Asia, from Mesopotamia to the Black Sea. All the wars that took place between Persian and Near Eastern kingdoms were fought on their land. Hence they were subject sometimes to an Eastern, sometimes to a Western Power, and sometimes were split up between the two. Contrary to those of Syria, however, their mountain districts are so forbidding that though armies might pass through them they never settled there. Hence there is lacking that cosmopolitanism that has always been characteristic of Syria. The Armenians have remained a warlike mountain people. As often as they are able, they re-establish their autonomy in whole or partial inde-

pendence. They refuse to submit to constraint. They resisted the efforts of the Sassanian kings to convert them to Zoroastrianism just as firmly as they did the attempts of the Byzantines to bring them back from Nestorianism into the bosom of the Orthodox Church. In the days of the Romans and of the Crusaders and Seljuks, independent Armenian kingdoms extended across the Taurus to Cilicia, the Gulf of Alexandretta, and as far as Antioch. They established themselves in the hills everywhere—in the mountain city of Zeitun, in the Amanus range, in the Musa Dagh. That is one type of Armenians. Joubert said of them: 'In their own country they are hard-working peasants; and in their family life they give honour to the old men at their head, a woman honours her husband, a son his father, as in the days of the Patriarchs. They enjoy a quiet settled life, so long as the everlasting feuds of the Pashas and Kurds permit of it.'

Of another kind are those who do not live in their own country. Some of them no doubt emigrated of their own free will. But many of them were simply transplanted, just as the Jews were by the Babylonians, the Greeks by the Elamites and Assyrians. Tamerlane settled Armenians in Samarkand beside Turks, Arabs, Greeks and Jacobites. Shah Abbas brought five thousand Armenian families to Ispahan from Julfa near Mount Ararat. There they live to this very day in their own part of the town which once again is named Julfa. The Armenians in Ispahan put up a stubborn resistance to the conquering Afghans long after the Persians had abandoned their section of the town. Thus for a long period they were good fighters even in foreign lands. Bardazag, a town of twenty thousand inhabitants in the neighbourhood of Constantinople was another place in which Armenians were artificially settled and remained purely Armenian up to the time of the World War.

In addition to such integral Armenian settlements, there have always been individual Armenians living in the great commercial centres. They are intelligent and clever business people. All Europeans going to Ispahan in the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century took up their abode as a matter of course with the Armenians at Julfa. The Armenians had a monopoly of the trade between Persia and Holland and were taxed accordingly. At the end of the nineteenth century the

English made the Armenians officials of the newly established telegraph service in Persia—they were the only ones possessing sufficient adaptability for the work. And these Armenians, in the South Persia Rifles under Sir Percy Sykes, did valuable work for the English during the World War in the guerrilla warfare that arose in an officially neutral Persia. This brings us to the decisive point, to the cause of all adverse opinions and massacres. These Armenian-Persian telegraph officials cannot be blamed for taking the side of their foreign employers in a struggle in which the Government at 'Teheran itself changed sides from one moment to the next, according to the situation on the Western and Mesopotamian fronts. The important point is that, while they were Persian subjects, they also professed another fealty—to the Christian kingdom of Armenia that had no legal existence. That is the tragedy of all minorities. It is the worse for the Armenians since they possess not even the tiniest country as a centre to their political ideals. This lack of a country is the reason for their perfidies. They have always betrayed their overlords. In 1475 Mahomet II owed them his conquest of the town of Kaffa in the Crimea, a Genoese commercial settlement on the Black Sea.

The city only held out for three days. On the fourth it yielded to the mercy of the conqueror, which took its usual form. Forty thousand inhabitants were deported to Constantinople; one thousand five hundred Genoese youths of noble birth were drafted as recruits into the Janissaries. A week after the sack of the town, Achmed gave a great banquet to the most prominent of the Armenians who had betrayed the city to him. At the end of it he dismissed them one by one down a narrow staircase at the bottom of which the executioner was waiting to cut off their heads.

About the year 1800, south of the Caucasus, Russians and Turks and Persians were all more or less openly at daggers drawn. Any one who had business in those parts at the time knew that Armenians were ready and willing to provide forged passports, also monks' habits, for people who wished to escape unobserved across the frontiers. The uses to which the Armenians were put even after the end of the War is described by Freya Stark:

The Government finally decided to finish Mir Ali Khan. It sent an Armenian friend of his, called Sangari Garkhan, to join in some small expedition against a neighbouring potentate.<sup>1</sup> The campaign was successful, and the two were riding back side by side over the Khurramabad Pass into Alishtar, when the Armenian suddenly turned on his ally: the government troops he had with him closed in and shackled Mir Ali Khan and hurried him off, before his men could rally, to Khurramabad, where he was instantly hanged. Meanwhile the Armenian entered the fort as a friend, took possession in the Shah's name, and proceeded to overrun and disarm the plains of Alishtar and Khava and to destroy any building that could ever be turned into a fortress. These ruins are still visible here and there. He was rewarded by being made Governor, but has since come to a bad and suitable end.<sup>1</sup>

In April 1929 'Foreign Affairs' published an article upon the activities of American Protestant missionaries before the War in the Near East. It says:

That they were in sympathy with Armenian nationalist aspirations cannot be doubted. American missions were an important factor in the political education of the Armenians according to Western formulas. From American missionaries and mission schools Armenians learned anew to cherish their language and historical traditions; became acquainted with Western ideals of political, social, and economic progress; acquired more active discontent with their lot and developed an acute sense of superiority to their Moslem peasant neighbours. To the American missionary the Armenian national cause owes the education of Western public opinion concerning the aspirations of Armenia.<sup>2</sup>

It may be added that the Armenian pamphlets of the 'nineties were printed in American mission schools.

Here we have an example of foreign private enterprise within the Turkish empire itself. To this was added the diplomatic activity of the Great Powers.

'The Sublime Porte', runs Article LXI of the Treaty of Berlin, 'undertakes to carry out, without further delay, the improvements and reforms demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians, and to guarantee their security against the Circassians and Kurds.' It was to keep

<sup>1</sup> Freya Stark: *Valley of the Assassins*, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> *Foreign Affairs*, April 1929, pp. 403-4.

the Powers informed periodically of the 'steps taken to this effect'.

The 'Sick Man' on the Bosphorus must have felt such incessantly renewable intervention as the continual re-opening of a wound. Hitherto the Armenians had been one people of the Ottoman empire among many—Arabs, Greeks, Kurds, Macedonians. With the backing of the Great Powers they became an internal danger. Abdul Hamid, that cruel, wily Sultan, had a particular prejudice in favour of the Kurds, the hereditary enemies of the Armenians. Hence he made no attempt to restrain the actions of the Kurds. He allowed everything to go on as before. In 1894 an Armenian massacre took place at Sassun. The result was feverish diplomatic activity, pressure brought to bear on the Sublime Porte, promises made by the Sublime Porte. And the outcome of this was that massacres occurred throughout the country, in Trebizond and Van and Bitlis, in Aleppo, Adana, and Payash. World public opinion was horrified, but left the Armenians to their fate. Only the Armenians of Zeitun, who had received timely warning, disarmed the Turkish guards, defended their city against eighty thousand Ottoman troops, and remained unharmed because they undertook their own defence. Is it surprising that the Armenians were disappointed in the Americans 'because they encouraged the rising and promised more than they could fulfil'?

None of this had been forgotten in the year 1915. The Young Turkish rebellion of 1908 did indeed bring a temporary period of co-operation between the Young Turks and the Armenians. But the Young Turks were, contrary to the old Ottoman kingdom, nationalists, that is to say they were hostile to the non-Turkish races within the empire.

The World War gave rise to three movements regarding Armenians that evolved independently of one another.

The first was the Turkish resolve to render innocuous those peoples upon whom they did not feel able to rely. World opinion does not favour massacres—the Turks' German allies exerted gentle diplomatic pressure in favour of the Armenians. Hence other means were employed. Men of military age were taken out of the army and put into labour columns to work on the roads. Conditions of work, as everybody knows, may be made pleasant or otherwise. The latter course was adopted.

Families were 'sent away'. If they happened to perish in consequence, as a result of lack of water, food, and means of transport—so much the worse for them. At all events they had died a natural death. The place to which they were deported was Aleppo and the country behind it, the Gesireh, the steppe-land between the Euphrates and the Khabur. Europeans who passed along the road from Alexandretta to Aleppo at the time told frightful stories of what they had seen. Corpses lay by the wayside, beside emigrants' camps in which raged famine and plague. They were convinced that not a single Armenian would remain alive. They were wrong. Many did survive.

The second movement was the attempt of the Allies to win the Armenians to their cause as well as the Assyrians and Arabs. It began with the Russian invasion of northern Persia and Turkey, and the liberation of their Armenian Christian brothers. It only took practical form towards the end of the War, at the time when the Soviet revolution caused Russia to secede from the Allies. The great danger from the point of view of the Allies was that the Central Powers might gain access to the oil wells of Baku, for thereby their raw materials blockade would have been pierced at one of the most important points. The great difficulty was how to bring an army into this remote district. The Russians were disunited since the revolution. Most of the soldiers were red; a few officers held together small anti-Bolshevik bands. The Tartars of the Caucasus regarded the moment as best suited for the establishment of a Tartar republic. No one knew as yet whether this would be pro- or anti-Bolshevik. The English sent out a small company of officers and a few men and arms in the Dunsterville Mission. The mission worked its way from Mesopotamia to northern Persia, was stuck in the snow at intervals, realized that it was surrounded by hostile Persian tribes, and twice advanced towards the Caspian Sea, on one occasion actually as far as Baku. Accompanying the English was a French Catholic priest, M. Poidebard, who had laboured in these parts before the War. The Armenians were mobilized with the promise of the creation of an independent State.

With biting sarcasm Sir Percy Sykes describes the methods of warfare used in this northern arena:

The position of affairs at Baku at this period almost defied description. The government was carried on by committees, which intrigued against one another, and by Russian and Armenian generals who gave contradictory orders, few of which were obeyed. The Armenians ought to have realized that they would be massacred in the event of Baku falling, if only for the sufficient reason that they had quite recently killed some thousands of its Tartar inhabitants. Yet they considered that the British should bear the brunt of the fighting, while they themselves reserved the right to criticize their allies freely and unfairly . . . their machine-guns were each manned by a group, and when the men decided they required a change, they returned to Baku without permission, taking their machine-gun with them and, of course, leaving a gap in the scheme of defence. Again, when requested to dig themselves in, the suggestion raised a storm of indignation, couched in the words: 'Only cowards dig trenches. We are not cowards, but Armenians thirsting for the fight.' They usually ended these protests by lining up and firing a volley at the sky, regardless of the futility of the proceeding and the scarcity of ammunition. The Gilbertian touch was strengthened by the fact that the power station supplied light to the Turkish headquarters as well as to the town!<sup>1</sup>

The conclusion of peace brought this particular war to an apparently favourable issue for Armenia. Now the Allies brought their third process into action—the diplomatic. The spheres of influence in western Asia Minor had been divided since 1917. Buffer States—an Armenian and a Kurdish—were to be erected in the east against the Soviet Russian danger and against Persia. The Armenians specified their desires. They wished to have the provinces Erivan, Siwas, Erzerum, Kharpout, Diar Bekir, Bitlis and Van. It was a large slice of territory. In one part of these provinces the Kurds were in the majority. Hence after long discussion only a small Armenian State was formed in the north, with Erivan as its capital. Its life was short. For the Turks carried on the war, to prevent the dismemberment of their land. The Americans, whose President Woodrow Wilson had, fully conscious of the moral responsibility of America, promised to take over the mandate for Armenia, were not prepared to resort to arms for the sake of so distant a country.

To-day the word Armenia has been erased from the map of

<sup>1</sup> *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. II, No. 2., 15th December 1923.

Turkey. The Christian basilicas in Erzerum and Trebizond have fallen to ruin. The Turks were of opinion that a nation who had made war upon their State had in future better live outside its frontiers. For this reason the Armenians are the object of periodical deliberations by the League of Nations. But we shall have more to say about those Armenians who are still living in Asia, the descendants of the ones who were exiled to Aleppo and the Gesireh during the War, as well as of the population of the Soviet Russian Caucasian republic.

### THE ASSYRIANS

Up to the time of the World War the Assyrians enjoyed the advantage that the Great Powers did not trouble about them. They therefore lived their own lives in peace and were not massacred. They are our old friends the Nestorians of the mountains under the spiritual and temporal leadership of the Mar Shimun (originally Simun or Simeon). They call themselves Assyrians because they live north of Mosul in the part that was once the kingdom of the Assyrians, from whom they claim to be descended. Before the World War their mountainous country was divided up between the Turkish and Persian empires. They were not the sole inhabitants of this country. They shared it with their foes the Kurds. During the World War the Kurds proved themselves stout fighters in the Turkish cause. This fact together with the subsequent persecution of the Christians was probably the reason why the Assyrians as well as the Armenians decided to fight on the side of the Allies. They were affectionately called 'our smallest ally' by the English. They as well as the Armenians were 'liberated' by the Russians who were invading Turkey and Persia. As soon as Russia fell out of the War and the Turks once more advanced, they fled into Mesopotamia to the English, not only those who were Turkish subjects but also the Persian Assyrians from the mountains by Lake Urmia.

They were established in a camp near Mosul together with the Armenian refugees. The English paid the bills. The various camp commanders did their best to see the good side of their charges. But they quarrelled among themselves and there was



continual trouble. The Persian Assyrians followed a leader named Aga Petros. The Turkish Assyrians had a child as Mar Shimun; for the Patriarchal dignity is a family prerogative. Since the Patriarch is not allowed to marry, the office passes to a brother or nephew. The last Patriarch had been murdered by Aga Simkho, a Kurd. His brother had died of tuberculosis, for the climate of the Mesopotamian plains does not suit the mountaineers. The real power, however, did not lie in the hands of the child Mar Shimun but in those of his aunt, honoured by the English under the title Lady Surma.

The English tried at least to combine utility with the expense. They had many difficulties with the Kurds and Arabs in the conquered territory. So they made soldiers of the Assyrians under the name of Iraq Levies. These soldiers were so brave that even the Gurkhas spoke of them with respect. Their methods of warfare were not, it is true, quite 'regular'. Since the English manner of campaigning seemed to them slow and boring, a whole corps deserted one fine day. A little while later they wrote a letter to their English commanding officer. 'To our Beloved and revered Commander. Peace be multiplied unto you. Be it known to you, our dear Father, that we did not run away because we did not wish to kill Kurds, but because we wished to do so, and by the blessing of God we have done so for the last eight days.' An enumeration of their losses follows, with the remark: 'But we have killed a lot more Kurds! And now if you will promise to punish us yourself and not send us to the dreadful Mosul gaol, be it known to you that we will return to duty.'<sup>1</sup>

The attempt to resettle the Assyrians in the mountains was only partially successful. The mountains did not come in the English sphere of influence, the frontier between Iraq and Turkey had not been settled. Nevertheless considerable bodies of Assyrians were furnished with arms and money and sent off to the Turkish hills. But Aga Petros's people wanted to go back to their own mountains by Lake Urmia. Some of them died, some of them reached home. Others came back again. The Iraq Levies were still recruited exclusively from Assyrians to the great chagrin of Arabs and Kurds. Every Assyrian as he left the

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of the Central Asian Society*, October 1920.

service was given a fine new rifle in order that he might defend himself against the Kurds when he returned home. By 1933—the year of the massacre—ten thousand Assyrians had been furnished with modern weapons by this means. Meanwhile a quarrel arose which actually did not concern the Assyrians at all but which became a decisive factor in settling their fate—the dispute between England and Turkey over the Mosul oil wells. The Turks sent a Vali into the border lands with an armed escort. The Assyrians took him prisoner but subsequently released him. The Turks marched their troops into the hills in which the Assyrians had thankfully settled again three years before. Eight thousand Assyrians once more fled to the English.

Now the League of Nations took a hand in the Mosul dispute. Jafar Pasha, the Prime Minister of Iraq, and Yassin Pasha each in turn stated: 'The Government of Iraq is officially pledged to provide lands in Iraq for those Assyrians who might be dispossessed of their original homes by the League of Nations, and to . . . ensure them the utmost possible freedom from interference.'<sup>1</sup> At that time the Iraq Government was under British control, for England was the mandatory Power. Sir Henry Dobbs wrote on the subject of the above statement: 'It can hardly be doubted that this liberal attitude on the part of the Government of Iraq had its influence on the deliberations of the Frontier Commission. . . .'<sup>2</sup> And Sir Henry Dobbs ought to know, because from 1923 onwards he was (the second) British High Commissioner in Iraq.

The Frontier Commission worked out its proposal in favour of Iraq and England; the League of Nations decided that that part of the disputed territory which contained the oil should go to Iraq, and the northern part with the Hakiari hills, the hills of the Assyrians, should go to the Turks. Since the War the Turks had had no use for the Assyrians. They turned out those who had stayed in the country and met with machine-guns those who wished to come back.

As long, however, as Iraq remained mandated territory, all went well for the Assyrians. The 'smallest ally' continued to

<sup>1</sup> Letters of Gertrude Bell, p. 446.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 446.

provide troops for the English. They were well paid, they were continually praised. More than ever they looked down upon Arabs and Kurds, and grew arrogant. The lavish pay which was sent to their families permitted them to live in a formerly unimagined state of luxury—and this in the midst of a comparatively poor Arab and Kurd population. Where formerly they had been disliked, they were now hated.

In October 1932 the Iraq mandate came to an end. The report of the Mandatory Commission was not considered until the Council of the League of Nations met in December. The resolution proposed by Dr. Benes as *rapporteur* was adopted. He expressed himself as satisfied with the suggestions of the Iraq Government on behalf of the Assyrians.

Eight months later the massacre took place. What and how exactly everything happened will perhaps never be known, for not only the Iraq Government but also the British Legation in Baghdad have striven to prevent the publication of the facts. The choice before England was confined to one of two courses—either to annul the independence of Iraq and once again to take over the responsibility for the Assyrians by reassuming the mandate, or else to support the Iraq Government.

One thing, at all events, was certain. The now twenty-five-year-old Mar Shimun lived in Baghdad, and a certain Yaku Ismael, a native of the village of Simal, was the ringleader of the Assyrians in the Mosul district. An American missionary acted as guarantor for him and he was given a pass to go to Baghdad in order to bring forward the Assyrian claims there. Instead, he went across the Tigris into Syria with eight hundred armed men. More followed. The French protested. The Iraq Government forbade any more Assyrians to cross the frontier. The eight hundred found that no good land was available for them in Syria as Yaku Ismael had promised there should be. So they decided to go back. They told the Iraq frontier guard on the other side of the Tigris that they wanted to return and deliver up their arms. They waded through the river. They slew the sentry. Then they proceeded inland against the Iraq troops. For twelve years the Assyrians had been told that they were the finest troops in the world, and the Iraqis that they were no good at all. To the surprise of both parties, in the battle that followed

the Iraqis, led by General Sidky Bekr, the fiercest opponent of the Assyrians, put the Assyrians to flight.

Among the Assyrians, however, were certain people who were followers neither of the Mar Shimun nor of Yaku Ismael. They wished only to live in peace. Every minority contains some such. Indeed, they possibly constitute the majority of any minority. Only since they are peaceable folk no one takes any notice of their wishes. Some hundreds of these people now realized that a war was in progress. They had no wish to be killed, so at Simal they went to place themselves under the protection of the Iraq police and delivered up their arms. On August 11th they were killed by the Iraqi troops. That was how the massacre occurred. The question is whether it was carefully planned beforehand or whether it happened on the inspiration of the moment. There is no evidence to show either way. At all events all English officers had been removed from the district some days before. Afterwards the Assyrian villages were delivered over to the Kurds and Shammar Arabs for plundering. Twenty were wholly destroyed and twenty partially.

That brings the story to an end. Some ten thousand Assyrians decided to remain in Iraq. The rest are to the present day awaiting the decision of the League of Nations as to their future dwelling place. We shall meet again with those of their brothers who are living in Syria.

#### SHIITES AND SUNNITES

The great division of Islam into Shiites and Sunnites originated not in metaphysics and questions of dogma, it was carried out not in Councils and theological disputes, but upon the battlefield. It is not a matter of different interpretations occurring in later centuries, but of an argument between friends and relations of the Prophet himself, within the first sixty years of his death. One thing, however, it has in common with the early schisms in the Christian Church is that dissatisfaction among subject peoples turned it into a political matter; and to this day, to a far greater extent than is the case in Christian domestic strife, it is a decisive factor in political affairs. From the point of view of politics there are two centres of the Shiite movement

against the Sunni predominance. First the central and lower districts of the Euphrates, containing the cities of Kufa and Basra and what has always been regarded as a hot-blooded, rebellious, and unstable population. Secondly the subject peoples of Persia whose national feelings still revolt in retrospect against the subjugation of their countries by the Arabs, and who therefore to this day curse the two first Caliphs Abu Bekr and Omar in the daily prayers. Much in the same way as Alexander was brought into the Persian royal tradition by invented ties of blood did a historical transformation take place regarding the Arabs who had conquered Persia. According to the legend, the daughter of the last Sassanian king Yezdigird was saved from her condition of slavery by Ali and given in marriage to his son Hussein. Thus the descendants of the house of Ali, the Imams of the Shiite sects, are legitimate in Persian eyes, and are reckoned as true descendants of the Sassanians.

The real dispute concerns the question as to who is the lawful successor to Mahomet. In actual fact it was Abu Bekr, the close friend and father-in-law of the Prophet. The Shiites say that this was wrong. Upon Mahomet's last pilgrimage, so they say, he met the Angel Gabriel who commanded him to designate Ali as his successor. The most radical among the Shiites go so far as to say that the Angel Gabriel made a mistake in the first place and only delivered the Word of God to Mahomet in mistake for Ali.

Much is to be said in favour of Ali who was, in fact, the fifth Caliph in succession to Mahomet. He was a cousin of Mahomet's. He was the husband of Mahomet's favourite daughter Fatima. He was the father of the only male descendants of Mahomet—Hassan and Hussein. And, which is perhaps most important of all, he was either the second or the third person to accept the Prophet's doctrine. Ali was the very ideal of chivalry—brave in battle, wise in council, eloquent, loyal to his friends, generous to his enemies, a pattern for all time, the hero of songs and poetry, proverbs and tales. One thing only was lacking in him—he was no politician. The first revolt against him, incited by Ayesha, Mahomet's favourite wife, whose marital fidelity he had once dared to question, he suppressed in a battle near Basra. But in a battle against the Syrian governor Muawiyeh,

Ali allowed himself to be inveigled from a victorious battle to negotiations. Neither he nor his advisers were a match for their opponents in the negotiations. Muawiyeh gained in credit. Ali's adherents gradually deserted him, and a few years later he was murdered with a poisoned sword.

Ali's first-born son liked good living and took no interest in politics. He allowed Muawiyeh, who had by now become the first Omayyad Caliph, to buy him off with a princely sum of money and vast estates. That should have settled the whole affair, but dissatisfaction was rife in the extensive kingdom that had come to mushroom growth within a few decades. Muawiyeh realized it before his death and sent the following message to his son Yasid: 'As for Husayn, the restless men of Iraq will give him no peace till he attempt the empire; when thou hast gotten the victory, deal gently with him, for truly the blood of the Prophet runneth in his veins. It is Abdulla son of Zobayr that I fear most for thee. Fierce as the lion, crafty as the fox, destroy him root and branch.'<sup>1</sup>

The opposite happened. Ibn Zubayr, who himself aspired to the Caliphate, goaded Hussein, Ali's second son, into answering the call of the people of Kufa. For he knew that the legitimate heir must first be disposed of before his own plans had any chance of success.

In order to wage war money is necessary. Hussein was a poor man. His brother Hassan whose duty it should have been, as head of the family, to provide for the remaining members of the family, had squandered the riches bestowed on him by Muawiyeh. So Hussein set out against Kufa with only seventy men, thirty on horseback and forty on foot. The fighting capacity of the little band was further weakened by the fact that they brought their wives and children with them. Individual Bedouin joined them and drifted away again. The attempt was hopeless. The people of Kufa, who had called to Hussein, held back, waiting to see what would happen. Then they followed the Omayyad governor Obaydulla who sent out an army against Hussein. One man only, a chieftain named al-Hurr, went over to Hussein, crying to the people of Kufa: 'Alas for you! You invited him and he came, and you not only deceived

<sup>1</sup> Sykes: *History of Persia*, Vol. I, p. 539.

him, but are now come out to fight against him. Nay, you have hindered him and his wives and his family from the waters of the Euphrates, where Jews and liars and Sabaeans drink, and where pigs and dogs disport themselves.<sup>1</sup>

The seventy men were confronted by the overwhelmingly superior force of an organized army. They fought until the last man was slain. Not a single one remained alive. Then Shimr, the leader of the army, brought their heads to the governor. Obaydullah scornfully turned over the head of Hussein with his staff. From among the crowd rose the voice of an old Arab: 'Gently, it is the grandson of the Prophet. By Allah! I have seen these very lips kissed by the blessed mouth of Mohamed!'<sup>2</sup>

The children of Hussein, his sister, and his head were brought to the Caliph at Damascus. And after a space his sister took the head and made her way back to the battlefield and buried the head with the rest of his body. Round this spot the city of Kerbela arose, the most sacred city of the Shiites. Nearby is Najaf, the city containing the tomb of Ali, and six miles north of Baghdad is the city of Kazimain; in the heart of Iran is the city of Qum, and far away in the east, on the border of Afghanistan, the city of Meshed—all holy places of the Shiites, in which the memory of Ali and Hussein is as living to-day as of yore. Golden cupolas, cupolas of pure, glistening, flawless gold, rise above the mosques of these cities, and with the golden and blue-green of the minarets shine far out across the desert, visible long before a man's eyes can see the green of the trees surrounding the cities. And outside the gates of Najaf and Kerbela stretch vast cemeteries, the graves of the faithful who wished to rest beside the remains of their saints.

On the tenth day of the month Muharram, on the day before Hussein's death, the passion play of his death is performed throughout the Shiite world, and forty days later the play 'The Return of the Head'. And if a Sunnite is unwelcome even in quiet times in Kerbela or Najaf, he will take even greater care not to be seen at the season of the passion plays. For at these times feelings run riot. Women wail unceasingly, black-clothed

<sup>1</sup> Sykes: *History of Persia*, Vol. I, p. 541.

<sup>2</sup> Idem.

men beat their bare backs and breasts with chains. And it has happened on various occasions that the man who played the part of Shimr in the play has been torn to pieces by the crowd. Such a Shimr, whose life was thus threatened in the twentieth century, was so lost to proper feeling as to break the spell, to dash out of the procession and to hurl himself at the feet of the Governor-General crying: 'I am not Shimr at all! I am the cook, Your Excellency!'

Not a year passes without the shedding of blood in memory of Ali and Hussein. And even Europeans, privily watching the passion play cannot escape from the mass-suggestion of grief.

Najaf [writes Gertrude Bell to her father in 1920] mysterious, malign, fanatical, but drawing you with wonder and reluctance, by its beauty and unfathomableness.

The last time I had been there I was lunching with Captain Marshall who was murdered eight days later. And we walked the same path round the town and said just these things about Najaf—alas, too truly. . . .

The evolution of Shiah into a political movement proceeded slowly. The children of Hussein dwelt in Medina and bewailed their lot to the pilgrims who journeyed through there. The people of Kufa and Najaf were always rebellious and ready to take part in any rising against the reigning Caliph. In the middle of the eighth century they supported the House of Abbas against the Omayyads, only to be suppressed by the Abbassids. Even the foundation of the city of Baghdad in the year 762 is to be ascribed to the desire of the Abbassids to have their capital beyond the sphere of the faithless men of Kufa. Under Mamun, the son of Haroun al Rashid, the seditious feeling throughout the country was so violent that he decided to put an end to the perpetual unrest by an act of conciliation. He nominated Ali Rhiza, the head of the House of Ali, as heir to the throne and gave him his daughter to wife. The Shiites rejoiced. The Sunnite people of Baghdad rose in utter fury against Mamun, and made his brother Caliph. Mamun, who was living in eastern Persia was in a very difficult situation. He was released from it by the sudden death of Ali Rhiza after eating too many grapes. The grapes may, of course, have been poisoned. The Shiites say they were; the Sunnites deny it. And



when Shiite pilgrims visit the tomb of Ali Rhiza in Meshed, they cry: 'Curses upon Haroun, curses upon Mamun!'

Mutavakil, the Abbassid Caliph who treated Christians and Jews so badly, was also so hostile to the House of Ali that he caused the grave of Hussein in Kerbela to be ploughed up. From thenceforward the Shiites existed as a clandestine sect. In 963, a hundred years later than Mutavakil, a Persian tribal chief named Mois-ed-Dewlet, the Bujide, rose against the House of Abbas and used the Shiites in his struggle. With this means of exerting mass-influence they became an organized power. They had not yet, however, a dynasty to represent their power. The Shiite-Ismailian dynasty of the Fatimids in Egypt, overthrown by the Sunnite Aladin, failed to become the rallying point of the movement.

Highly interesting is the reaction of the Mongols, who now broke in upon the hostile parties, without either bias or preconception. The first were obviously uncertain. They wavered between Shiah, Sunni, and Christianity. Not so Timur Lenk. He had a definite theoretical interest in questions of religious schism. After the conquest of Aleppo he caused the learned men of the city to be brought before him and put guileful questions to them.

'Among those who fell in the battle of Haleb, which are martyrs?' The Mufti evaded the trap by answering as did the Prophet when an Arab asked the same insolent question: 'They who fought for the Word of God.'—Thereupon Timur became garrulous. 'I am', said he, 'but half a man' (referring to his lameness) 'yet I have conquered Persia and Iraq, India and Tartary.' 'Thank God for it and slay none,' replied the Mufti. 'As God liveth,' continued Timur, 'I slay none of set purpose. You yourselves slay your own souls. By God, I slay none, and I grant you security for your lives and your goods.' This assurance unsealed the lips of the Sheikhs and learned men, they spoke as from their pulpits and desks, until the supreme judge cried: 'Be silent, and let this man speak who knows what he is saying.' The second question was, what their opinion was of Moavia (Muawiyeh) and Yesid—the first of whom had ousted Ali from the Caliphate, and the second of whom had caused Hussein, the son of Ali, to be executed. A Sunnite judge answered: 'They fought the holy fight for the Faith.'—Timur answered wrathfully: 'Verily, Moavia was an oppressor and Yesid was a malefactor. And you people of Haleb

are like the men of Damascus who slew Hussein.' (Hammer-Purgstall.)

Thereupon Aleppo was delivered over for a fortnight to plunder, murder, and torture, at the end of which time the learned men were once more commanded to appear before the face of the Mongol prince. Meanwhile they had thought things over and evidently decided to adapt the precepts of scholarship to the requirements of the State.

The historiographer now replied in accordance with the inclination of the conqueror that there could be no doubt that right was on Ali's side and that Moavia had not been the rightful Caliph, since the Prophet had said: 'The Caliphate will last only thirty years after me,' but that, according to the dictum of one of those most learned in the law, even unrightful rulers could effectively invest others with the office of Judge. This admission of the validity of his governmental acts pleased the autocrat and he recommended the Cadi and the Mufti to the particular care of his eight Emirs. (Hammer-Purgstall.)

After that who would not suppose Timur Lenk to have been a convinced adherent of the House of Ali? But no. In Baghdad he performed his devotions at the grave of Abu Hanifa, the first of the four Sunnite teachers of orthodox Moslem Law. He was simply indifferent to good and evil, as also to Shiah and Sunni. Thus the period of Mongol rule may be regarded definitely as a time of State toleration of Christians, Shiites and Sunnites.

In the Ottoman kingdom the Sunnite doctrine became the State religion, in the Persian kingdom of the Safavids the Shiite. From that time onwards the quarrel of the two sects was a *casus belli* between the two empires. Shah Ismael, a Safavid, sent as a 'present' to Sultan Bayazid II the head of an Uzbek Khan—for the Sunnite Uzbeks on the farther side of the Oxus were the natural allies of the Turks. Sultan Selim caused forty thousand Shiites to be murdered; and before his campaign against the Persians he sent a polite note to the Sunnite prince of Samarkand asking him for help against the Shiites.

In the eighteenth century the Afghans ruled in eastern and southern Persia, and the Turks invaded the north to re-establish

the son of the deposed Shah and at the same time to gain possession of the country themselves. The Sunnite Afghan ruler Ashraf sent an ambassador to Constantinople with the question whether it was right to make war upon a Sunnite neighbour in alliance with a Christian Power—Russia—in order to re-establish the heretical Shiite dynasty. Opinion in Constantinople was in favour of the Afghans. But the Sultan's lust for land was greater than his religious scruples. The war proceeded. Now Ashraf sent a messenger to the Turkish Commander-in-Chief, asking why he made war upon Sunnites who were only obeying the divine behests by overthrowing the heretical Shiites. And so great was the power of the sectarian faith that a part of the Turkish army deserted and thus facilitated the victory of the Afghans.

So it went on through the centuries. The Mujtehids of Kerbela and Najaf turned their influence against the Persian dynasty of the Kajars, because they regarded it as illegitimate. In the twentieth century these same Mujtehids of Kerbela—a town which had long been under Turkish rule—fanned the revolutionary enthusiasm of the citizens of Teheran. And without their consistent support the parliamentary revolution (1906) would have collapsed. During the World War the mullahs of Shiraz set their influence against that of England, and the English were exposed to grave dangers as a result. After the War, when the new State of Iraq was in process of establishment, the hostility between Shiites and Sunnites was so deep and unbridgeable that it often threatened to ruin the stability of the youthful State. And even in quite recent times, at the betrothal feast of the heir to the Iranian throne with the princess of Egypt, there were on both sides people who privately shook their heads. The pious Sunnites of Cairo looked upon the bridegroom not merely as a Shiite but also as the heir to the throne of a kingdom in which the overwhelming influence of the priests had been broken with a strong hand. Progressive young people in Teheran feared that the advent of the Sunnite princess from a country like Egypt, bound by pious traditions, would lead to a renewal of the strength of religious influence. The mullahs, on the other hand, for the first time for years, walked through the streets holding their heads high. Thus, after nearly

thirteen hundred years of sanguinary religious wars, a faint attempt at reconciliation between the two hostile sects seems to be taking place—in the face of Western progressiveness, which is doing its best to dethrone, if not Allah, at least His preachers here on earth.

### THE ISMAILI AND THE OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN

From time to time a dignified and well-dressed individual makes an appearance at the League of Nations, takes the chair at some committee, makes a speech, and works for the promotion of peace among the nations and at the same time for the advantage of England. He moves in the highest society, is a member of the Marlborough Club, and owns far-famed race-horses. It is His Highness the Aga Khan. His home is in India. His rule, however, does not extend over an Indian State, but over a sect that is scattered over many countries in Africa and Arabia, in Syria, Persia, and India. This sect has many names, the most general of which is Ismaili. When Gertrude Bell was travelling in Syria before the War, two prisoners once formed part of her caravan. The Zaptieh who was acting as her guide was also in charge of the prisoners, deserters from the Sultan's army, who were bound together. He expressed himself freely on the subject of the two men:

They are Ismailis from Selemyyeh, and they worship a strange god who lives in the land of Hind. And some say she is a woman, and for that reason they worship her. And every year she sends an embassy to this country to collect the money that is due to her, and even the poorest of the Ismailis provide her with a few piastres. And yet they declare that they are Muslims: who knows what they believe?<sup>1</sup>

The foreign God in India is our friend the Aga Khan. And the people, however poor they may be, save what mite they can, and every year give up one fifth of their income to the emissary of the Aga. The Turks oppressed them as a consequence, for it irritated the local headmen to think that even such poverty-stricken districts should send contributions into foreign parts, and to a British national at that.

<sup>1</sup> Gertrude Bell: *The Desert and the Sown*, pp. 195-6.

The assertion that the God is a woman was due to a misunderstanding. The Ismaili, who allow no one to witness their divine services, worship a Virgin, not a dead one but a living one. She must be born on the twenty-seventh day of the month Rayab; she is named Rozah and is a divine being. She does no work, neither her hair nor her finger-nails are ever cut, and every man in the village wears a scrap of her garment or a hair of her head wound in his turban. If the Rozah wishes to marry she is not prevented from doing so, only she thereby loses her divine attributes, and another maiden, born on the same day, is put in her place.

Hitherto only two persons are known to have witnessed divine service among the Ismaili of the hills. Both say that the girl sat on a chair in the middle and round about her were grouped men kneeling and praying. In spite of the Aga Khan and the maiden Rozah the Ismaili assert that they are Moslems. So they are, in their own fashion; they are a branch of the great tree of the Shiites.

The Shiites only acknowledge as legitimate successors to the Prophet the Imams beginning with Ali. Orthodox Shiites recognize twelve Imams, the last of whom vanished in a mysterious way during a service. When the time is come, they believe he will reappear upon earth as a Mahdi. The Ismaili believe otherwise. The sixth of the legitimate Imams had a son Ismael. This Ismael was barred from the succession in favour of his younger brother Musa, for having drunk wine against the law. Ismael died. Musa became seventh Imam in 765. A section of the Faithful, however, cling to Ismael. They look upon him as the seventh and last. This is the reason why they are called Ismaili.

In the various centuries there have been many different kinds of Ismaili. The first were the Carmathians. They took the island of Bahrein and for a time ruled over the coastal districts of Arabia. They attacked Mecca and for some years stole away the sacred reddish-black meteorite from the Ka'aba. The next were the followers of the Persian eye-doctor ibn Maymun, who became the ancestor of the Fatimid dynasty. He founded a sort of secret society that seems to have had much in common with

the later Freemasons. The members were initiated after a long period of preparation. At each fresh stage another veil was taken from them. First they learned to question the Koran. Gradually they learned to doubt Mahomet. And finally it was made plain to them that all prophets and apostles were superfluous. They were to believe nothing and to dare everything. The only essential was to render blind obedience to the Grand Master.

Persian historians believe that ibn Maymun founded his secret society in order to put an end to the Arabic-Islam foreign domination of Persia. That may be true. But, if so, it was not successful. For the force of this first attack was dissipated in the Egyptian Fatimid rule. The Fatimids reigned with the help of all the secret adherents of the widespread society.

At the end of the eleventh century came a wholly fresh impetus. The great new organizer was called Hassan Sabah. His family came from the subversive district of Kufa. He studied, together with the future Grand Vizir Nizam-ul-Mulk and the future poet Omar Khayyám, at a Sunnite college in Nishapur, although he was secretly a Shiite. The three became close friends. At the suggestion of Hassan Sabah they vowed that if any one of them should come to power, he would share his wealth with the others. Nizam-ul-Mulk became Vizir. The poet Omar Khayyám came to him, Nizam-ul-Mulk gave him a pension and the two remained friends to the end of their lives. Hassan Sabah too came to the Vizir. He was given a post at Court, which he used in order to carry on intrigues. He was thrown out of the Court and left swearing vengeance. At this moment he met an agent of the Ismaili and became a member of the secret sect of Maymun. His advance was rapid. He remained in Syria until his plans were ready.

Hassan Sabah realized that it was not sufficient to make propaganda with the help of the initiates and to create a secret organization throughout all countries. In order to overthrow the Seljuks—who had meanwhile ousted the Arabs—he needed trained murderers, who were prepared to obey every command. He acquired possession of a mountain in the high and inaccessible Elbruz range north of what is now Teheran, and of the fortress Alamut, a dark, impressive, impregnable, mass of rock above an arid waste of stone, towering over a valley that was

fruitful as paradise. Here he trained his 'Fedai', his 'faithful followers'. He knew many means of influencing men. His study was an immense library. Esoteric knowledge in the service of destruction—that was his aim. One means whereby he made the Fedai submissive to his will has become famous through the story of Marco Polo, who tells of the fortress Alamut and of its Grand Master:

He had, in a lovely valley, betwixt two mountains, which were very high and inaccessible, caused a pleasant garden to be laid out, furnished with the best trees and fruits he could find, adorned with divers palaces and houses of pleasure, beautified with gilded bowers, pictures, and tapestries of silk. Through this place, by pipes to different parts of these palaces, run wine, milk, honey, and clear water; in them he had placed beautiful damsels, skilful in songs and instruments of music and dancing, and to make sports and delights unto men whatsoever they could imagine. They were also richly dressed in gold and silk, and were seen continually sporting in the garden and palaces. . . . Aloadine had certain youths, from twelve to twenty years of age, such as seemed of a bold and dauntless disposition, whom he instructed daily as to the delights of Mohammed's paradise, and how he could bring men thither; and when he thought proper, he caused a certain drink to be given to ten or twelve of them, which cast them into a dead sleep, and then he caused them to be carried into several chambers of the said palaces, where they saw things as aforesaid; as soon as they awaked, each of them had those damsels to supply them with meats and excellent wines, and yield all varieties of pleasures to them; insomuch that the fools thought themselves in paradise indeed.

When such a young man came to himself again in the harsh reality of the mountains, he was ready to do anything in order to regain such wondrous joys, and nothing could be more welcome to him than death, which promised him eternal sojourn in so glorious a world. Thus the Fedai became a sort of suicide corps. And because the narcotic, which Marco Polo called opium, was in reality hashish, they were given the name Hashishin—Assassins. Their occupation was principally murder.

It is a question whether Hassan Sabah, the Old Man of the Mountain, and his immediate successors themselves aimed at power. They were, in fact, the first organized Nihilists, beside whom the pre-War Nihilists and assassins of Russia appear as

wretched bunglers. Princes were murdered and their vizirs. Nizam-ul-Mulk, the friend of Hassan Sabah's youth, was of course one of the victims. In Syria, Rashid-al-Din-Sinân, one of the Grand Masters, made himself practically independent. It was he whom the Crusaders knew as the Old Man of the Mountain. Conrad of Montferrat, newly elected King of Jerusalem, fell victim to his emissaries. Attacks were twice made upon Saladin. He, the conqueror of Cairo and Jerusalem, besieged the Assassins' castle of Maysad, and was obliged to depart unsuccessfully. Two Caliphs, a Sultan of Khorasan, an Atabeg of Mosul, and two Seljuk princes were among the victims of the Order.

In some districts attacks were made not only upon the rulers, but also upon the common people. At the beginning of the twelfth century people began to vanish in a mysterious fashion in Ispahan. A panic resulted. At length an old beggar woman solved the riddle. She heard groans issuing from a house and gave the alarm. A crowd forced its way into the place, and found nearly five hundred victims, most of them crucified, a few still living. Everything was now explained. A blind man had been stationed at the corner of an alley and had called out to the passers-by: 'The blessing of God upon him who will take the hand of a poor blind man and lead him to the door of his house at the end of the street.' And in this fashion one person after another had been decoyed to his death. (After Sykes.)

Now and again a guest was invited to the mountain. In order to demonstrate to him the power of obedience two or three Fedai would be standing on the towers of the fortress. A sign from their master, and they would hurl themselves into the abyss. No ruler felt secure in these days. Every one searched the face of any new-comer, wondering whether he might not be an Assassin. Terror reigned from Egypt to Persia, from the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf.

It is a far cry from this mighty terrorist association of the Middle Ages to the poor hill farmers of the twentieth century and to that popular, cultured, peace-loving member of English society, the Aga Khan. The way leads across centuries of oblivion after the destruction of the fifty mountain fastnesses in the Elbruz mountains by the Mongol prince Hulagu. It leads



in the nineteenth century to the ancestor of the present Aga Khan, a noble estate owner in the south-eastern Persian province of Kerman. The Aga Khan of the year 1840 deposed the governor of Yezd and put himself in his place. He was overthrown and fled to India. His influence over the Ismaili in the borderlands was exerted on the side of the English in the first Afghan War and in the Sind campaign. It proved extremely useful. As a reward, the hereditary dignity of His Highness was bestowed upon this first Aga. His son still provided letters of introduction to the Angel Gabriel in order to assure his followers of a comfortable position in Paradise. And enlightened as the grandson may be—his spiritual subjects who worship him in western and central Asia and who save their pence to send to him, still believe firmly in the joys of Paradise to which he will bring them.

The Syrian Ismaili share their mountains with the Nasariyeh. The Ismaili and the Nasariyeh hate one another. But the Nasariyeh are in a majority and so they sometimes seize a village from the Ismaili, whose only hope is that the Government will help them to regain it.

The Nasariyeh keep their religion an even greater secret than the Ismaili. Nevertheless their Saint, Mahomet-ibn-Nosair, who lived in the ninth century, was an Ismaili. Contrary to the others, however, these mountain tribes between Antioch and Latakia were heathens until they adopted the new doctrine. The Islamic background, therefore, is lacking. Heathen customs and Phoenician traditions have remained living. Christianity has added its quota, including the Christmas and Easter festivals. No one has yet discovered from whence the people originally came. They are tall and usually fair-haired and blue-eyed. Many believe that they are the last remnant of a very ancient Iranian immigration. Others ascribe their fairness to the philo-progenitiveness of the Crusaders. One thing is certain. They feel themselves to be an elect people, and wish only to be left in peace.

Gertrude Bell's guide Mahmud tells her of the Nasariyeh:

Oh lady, it happened in the winter that I was collecting the tax. Now in the month of Kanun el Awwal (December) the Nosaires hold a great feast that occurs at the same time as the Christian

feast (Christmas), and the day before, when I was riding with two others in the hills, there fell a quantity of snow so that we could go no further, and we sought shelter at the first village in the house of the Sheikh of the village. For there is always a Sheikh of the village, oh lady, and a Sheikh of the Faith, and the people are divided into initiated and uninitiated. But the women know nothing of the secrets of the religion, for by God! a woman cannot keep a secret. The Sheikh greeted us with hospitality and lodged us, but next morning when I awoke there was no man to be seen in the house, nothing but the women. And I cried: 'By God and Muhammad the Prophet of God! What hospitality is this? And are there no men to make the coffee but only women?' And the women replied: 'We do not know what the men are doing, for they have gone to the house of the Sheikh of the Faith, and we are not allowed to enter.' Then I arose and went softly to the house and looked through the window, and, by God! the initiated were sitting in the room, and in the centre was the Sheikh of the Faith, and before him a bowl filled with wine and an empty jug. And the Sheikh put questions to the jug in a low tone, and by the Light of the Truth I heard the jug make an answer in a voice that said: 'Bl . . . bl . . .'. And without doubt, oh lady, this was magic. And while I looked, one raised his head and saw me. And they came out of the house and seized hold of me and would have beaten me, but I cried: 'Oh Sheikh! I am your guest!' So the Sheikh of the Faith came forth and raised his hand, and on the instant all those that had hold of me released me. And he fell at my feet and kissed my hands and the hem of my coat and said: 'Oh Hadji! If you will not tell what you have seen I will give you ten mejides!' And by the Prophet of God (upon him be peace!) I have never related it, oh lady, until this day.<sup>1</sup>

Since the end of the War the Nasariyeh are no longer known by this name. They are called Alawiyin, after Ali whom as descendants of the Ismaili they reverence. They regard the old name as an insult. But they cling to their old independence. And in case of a plebiscite such as that in the summer of 1938 concerning the Sanjak of Alexandretta, the Alawiyin are courted on all three sides—by the Turks, whom they disliked so heartily in the old days; by the Moslem Syrians, who otherwise look down upon their heretical views; and by the French who for the first time in their existence established a State for them, even though it was not of long duration.

<sup>1</sup> Gertrude Bell: *The Desert and the Sown*, pp. 234-5.

# DRUZES, DEVIL-WORSHIPPERS, AND OTHERS

The god of the Druzes has already been mentioned several times. He is the blue-eyed Hakim Biamrillah the Fatimid Caliph (996-1021), who treated Jews and Christians so badly and destroyed the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Historians declare him to have been a lunatic. The Druzes maintain that he was a Saint. Hakim, as a true god, had an apostle whose name was ad-Darazi. From him is derived the sect and the name Druze.

The Druzes live in the steepest, blackest, and most inaccessible of all the inaccessible mountains of Syria, on the edge of the desert between Damascus and Jerusalem. Since Hakim Biamrillah, being a Fatimid, was also an Ismaili, they have also their initiated and their uninitiated members. There is the 'spiritual class', which is subdivided into superiors, intellectuals, and exalted; and the laity, which contains masters and the unenlightened. Among the Druzes, contrary to the custom of the Ismaili, women may be initiated.

The Druzes have always been in bad odour—firstly with whomever happened to be in power, secondly with their neighbours the Arabs, and thirdly with their neighbours the Christian Maronites. Among the Bedouin the institution of the ghazu, the pillaging raid, is carried out amid wild excitement and dramatic ardour, but at the same time according to definite rules and usually without casualties. The Druzes take such raids in deadly earnest. They kill their enemies and turn the affair into a minor war. Formerly their territory was much larger than it is now. The authorities have gradually driven them back, especially since the coming of the French in the year 1860-1, after the Druzes had massacred the Maronites of the Lebanon.

Hence to-day they live crowded together in the most remote and impregnable of their hills. Instead of a Maginot line their—most effectual—system of defence used to consist in having no roads whatsoever. Until the time of the War their paths were so narrow that it was impossible for two people to walk abreast along them, and so steep that a horseman could advance but slowly. By this means the Druzes were successful at the begin-

ning of the nineteenth century in holding at bay the heir to the Egyptian throne, the mighty Ibrahim Pasha, who had conquered even the Wahabites. The fortunes of his arms were shattered before the Druzes. The Turks occasionally sent out punitive expeditions into the Druze country; but as a rule they did no more than appoint officials who knew very well that they were only there on sufferance.

After the War, the Druzes regarded the Nationalist Arab rule of the Emir Feisal in Damascus with deep mistrust. They were in favour neither of Islamic nor of Nationalist Arab union. They had their long-tested feudal system. In times of peace, quarrels between the leading families provided them with distraction. They wished for nothing else. The arrival of the French was also regarded with some suspicion. Apart from anything else, they were not Moslems. So the Druzes sent a delegation to the High Commissioner at Beirut to announce the conditions under which they would be prepared to submit to the French mandate. They should not be united with Syria, and they should have only Druzes as governors. A pact was made and all went well, until internal political changes in the French Government led to the recall of General Weygand, by far the most gifted High Commissioner hitherto in Syria. General Sarraill was sent in his place. He dismissed Weygand's functionaries. He sent Captain Carbillet to Suweidah, the capital of the Jebel Druze.

Captain Carbillet was an energetic man. He planned to make of the Jebel Druze a well-organized, flourishing little country. He built roads, he caused irrigation channels and water reservoirs to be hewn from the rock. Suweidah's main street was asphalted and a museum was built in the town. There was no money for all this in the Jebel Druze, for hill people are poor. So Carbillet adopted the method of compulsory labour. A law dating from Turkish times was still in force, according to which any man was liable to do four days' labour on public works in any year. Never had the Turks dared even to suggest such a thing in the Jebel Druze. Carbillet had no such qualms. The five thousand inhabitants of Suweidah were told that they must provide one hundred men and forty camels daily for work on the new water works. Any one who refused would be locked up. Whenever the Captain visited any village, the entire population

was expected to gather to do him honour. The hill people reacted to this exactly as once the Swiss did to Gessler's hat. If the population did not appear, a fine in gold must be paid, the notables were clapped in jail or were set to break stones at the roadside. Among other places, the Captain's coal cellar was used as a prison. Many a feudal lord must have sat there meditating vengeance.

The Captain meant well. He realized that under the Druze system of farming the land must be continually impoverished. The land, which was held in common, was divided up anew every three years. The most important families chose the pieces that seemed to them the best, the peasants tilled it all, both the part that had been chosen by the lords and that which was assigned to their own use. There was, therefore, no incentive to improve the land, since it would change hands again in three years' time. Carbillet commanded that any man who planted trees or vines on a piece of land should become the owner of that land. He established schools; and the Greek Catholic monks for whom he sent from Jerusalem served not only as teachers but also as spies. He even induced the Druzes—who are nearly all illiterate—to hold an election by means of a complicated system of hieroglyphics. And he himself emerged from the election as Governor.

The Druzes were first surprised, then indignant, at such orderly and systematic severity. Never had they experienced anything of the kind. They did not want schools. Nor did they want roads, for they were not even allowed to move from one place to another without a special permit from the Captain. For a year and eight months they kept quiet under a rule that infringed all their cherished rights, until Captain Carbillet went on a well-deserved spell of leave. Then they determined to put an end to it. At first they proceeded in the most ceremonious fashion. A delegation was sent to Beirut to demand the removal of Carbillet. General Sarraïl dismissed it. The treaty with the mandatory Government was produced. Sarraïl declared that it had a 'historical' value but no practical validity. Carbillet's locum-tenens in Suweidah, who represented the situation as dangerous and demanded an investigation, was removed by General Sarraïl. Petitions to the Government in Paris got no

farther than Beirut. Finally General Sarrail instructed his representative in Damascus to invite the heads of the four leading families among the Druzes to come to Damascus under the pretext of complying with their wishes. 'You will then inform them that I shall make them responsible for any disorders that may occur in the Jebel Druze, and that I shall send them to a safe spot which you will select for me.' The French executive in Damascus protested vainly against this order. Three of the feudal lords came and were taken into custody. The fourth stayed at home and kindled the fires of revolution.

The fourth was a man named Sultan, a member of the House of Atrash, the leading family among the Druzes. He had once already 'taken to the mountains' before the French. On that occasion it had been on account of an agitator who had sought sanctuary in Sultan's house. Sultan-ul-Atrash and his men had destroyed three French armoured cars. The French had destroyed his house by bombing it from the air. For a time he had vanished from sight. Then an amnesty had permitted his return.

A sound instinct on this occasion prevented his accepting the invitation to Damascus, and he called the populace to revolt. A week after the invitation the second largest town of the Jebel Druze was occupied. On the following day one hundred and seven Frenchmen lost their lives. Within a month the French losses had risen to eight hundred men and quantities of material. Atrash was now able to provide his followers with modern weapons. Moreover he had gained immensely in prestige, which induced scores of his fellow-tribesmen to join him, though in some cases they were his rivals. The revolt spread over neighbouring territory. Damascus associated itself with him as well as the people of the fruitful Hauran. The centre of resistance meanwhile remained in the black, deeply cleft hills of the Druzes. General Gamelin advanced into these mountainous regions successfully several times, only to be obliged to retire again, since lack of water and the difficulty of securing his lines of communication made it impossible for him to remain.

In the Druze rising of 1925-7 the Arabs made common cause with the Druzes against the mandatory Power, France. To-day the situation has changed to the precise opposite. By the Franco-

Syrian agreement of 1937 the overlordship of the Jebel Druze went to the Government of Damascus. The result was obvious. The Druzes rose against the Syrian domination. More will be said on this subject in the section on Syria.

While the Druzes worship Hakim Biamrillah as their God in secret ceremonies, the Yezidi in northern Syria and in the mountains of the Mosul district are quite simply devil-worshippers. Their prophet, the Sheikh Adi, lived in the twelfth century, but their customs are certainly relics of pre-Islamic, pre-Christian times. The Yezidi arrived at the very illuminating conclusion that the power of Evil on earth is stronger than that of Good. From this they drew the logical inference that the Lord of Evil, the Devil, should be worshipped. It might be possible to put him into a friendly mood by sacrifices. The Yezidi never deny the existence of God. On the contrary they understand His nature precisely. 'It is His business to do good,' they affirm and therefore it is not necessary expressly to ask Him to do so.

Their sanctuary—Sheikh Adi—stands on a steep grey rocky mountain, a strange agglomeration of tall, dazzling white cones built of rough stone lying close in the side of the hill. The sacred stream that runs through this edifice comes, so they believe, from the spring Zemzem in far-away Mecca. They do not like Arabs. Sometimes they come to blows with them. But the devil-worshippers are probably the most peaceable of all Asiatic hill tribes. They carry on their work in flowing white robes, with high red turbans on their heads, their narrow faces framed in tightly plaited braids or cunningly twisted curls.

These grave men who worship the devil may be taken as the prototype of all those who live their solitary lives in out-of-the-way marshy country and in mountainous places—of Sabaeans and Behai, of the surviving fire-worshippers and the Babi sects who tried to introduce progress and nationalism into Asia before the War by means of revolution and assassination. Most of them are, like the Yezidi and the Ismaili, poor and downtrodden people, and their organizations have no political significance. Nevertheless their geographical and spiritual isolation makes them a nursery for new movements. And it is only necessary

for some convincing and determined leader to appear, like the Mahdi in the Sudan, in order to turn a little community of this description into the centre of a dynamic, ever-widening movement. For evolution takes this course in the East—a passionate wave of religious and political action will arise from nothingness, and a sediment remains after each such wave, preserving the old doctrine until a fresh summons shall come.

One other mountain tribe must be mentioned, although it has never either formed a State as a conquering nation or made a separate existence for itself as a religious community. This is the tribe of the Kurds. They have always been there and evidently have at all times been just as addicted to robbery and as intractable as they are to-day. The King of Assyria caused the Kurdish chieftains to be flayed alive—if ever he managed to catch them. Xenophon, who travelled for many days through Kurd territory with his ten thousand, states that no Armenian villages were to be found near the Kurdish borders because the Kurds always plundered them.

The Kurds speak a language that is akin to Persian, and are reckoned as Aryans, although there is undoubtedly a strong admixture of Turkoman elements. In the north of Kurdistan they have always lived amongst and beside the Armenians and in the south in close proximity to the Assyrians. They have always fought with their Christian neighbours. They have always lived in territory disputed between Great Powers. Before the War the tribes were divided between the Persian and the Turkish empires. Since the War they have belonged to three countries—Turkey, Iraq, and Persia, and have been demanding a nationalist State of their own which was almost granted them at the end of the War.

The Frontier Commission that was deputed to report to the League of Nations on the Mosul question came to the conclusion that the Kurds were not yet capable of administering a State for themselves. Quarrels between the different tribes were too serious, and their political capabilities were not sufficiently evolved. Nevertheless a by no means despicable builder of a State came from the Kurdish people—Saladin, that noble knight, who knew how to combine the arts of peace with those



of war. And while all opinions agree in considering the Kurds to be a dangerous robber tribe, all who have come in personal contact with them are loud in their praise. In the midst of a world in which even Christian Syrian women never appear save heavily veiled, women with sun-tanned faces work in Kurdistan unveiled beside their men on the tobacco plantations and at the nut harvests. Kurdish women learn to ride and shoot and may even be appointed village elders. A Baghdad chauffeur tells the story of how he was once taken prisoner and disarmed by a Kurdish woman who had three rows of cartridges in her belt, and from the way in which he tells his tale it is clear that the memory of the encounter still has the power to frighten him six years after its happening.

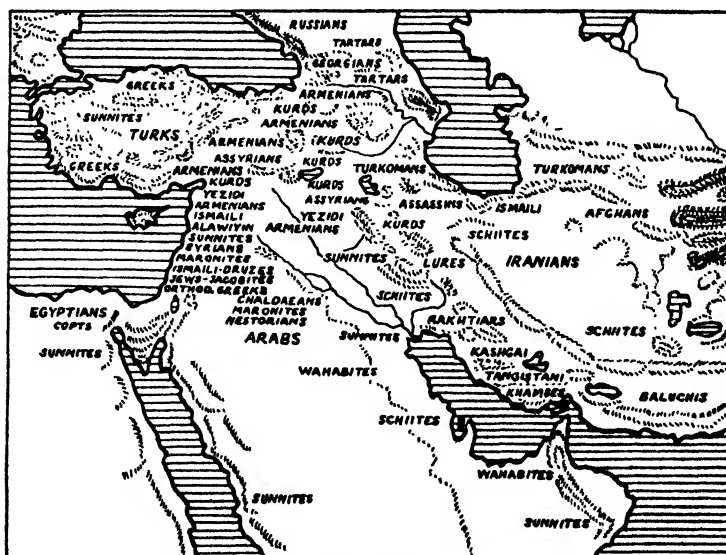
At the same time the Kurds are orthodox Sunnite Moslems. But so tolerant is their attitude in religious matters that at times when even the glance of a Christian was regarded as desecration to a mosque in the neighbouring Persian and Mesopotamian countries, a Christian European visitor might actually be housed in the mosque of a Kurdish village if that seemed the most suitable lodging for him. And Kurdish boys and girls, men and women, sing and dance together in the evenings, which would be unthinkable in the rest of the Islamic world.

One would have expected the Kurds to be favourably disposed towards the progressive institutions of Mustapha Kemal's Turkey. But they are not interested in progress, only in the preservation of their old habits and customs, in the retention of their Kurdish language. They have never yet taken notice of any overlordship, except in so far as their nominal suzerain helped or hindered wars of extermination against their neighbours. In pre-War days a newly appointed Vali in the province of Van is said to have ascertained when he took up his post that seven hundred of his subjects had been condemned to death but were in actual fact still at liberty. Whether he ever succeeded in apprehending one or more of them history does not relate. Nowadays it has become the custom to proceed against intractable tribes with aircraft. The British military aeroplanes in Iraq were the first to make themselves uncomfortably felt. Now the Turkish and Iraq air fleets have taken over the English inheritance. The Turkish has had a great deal

to do in recent years. Nothing is known as to the number of its victims. But no doubt the Kurds, who have successfully resisted Assyrians and Persians, Islam and Turkey, will continue to preserve their independent existence in the future. In Iraq, as will be shown, the Kurds, who serve as officers in the army, have acquired considerable influence upon the course of events in internal and external politics.

### THE POWER OF CUSTOM

Much has been said in the preceding pages of sanguinary battles, of assassination and massacres. This, however, is only one side, a passing though often unforgettable consequence of the close commingling and proximity of so many races and sects, tribes, and religions. The other side is a tolerance such as we in Europe can hardly imagine. For it does not spring from faith in the fundamental likeness of men but from a conviction of their differences. It is because men are different that they have different gods and different laws. In the Ottoman empire that ruled over many peoples there was no single Law valid for all as in the Roman empire which also ruled over many nations.



THE TRIBES

Every people and every religious community had its own laws and its own machinery for carrying them out. Religion and custom and law in the East are indissolubly bound up with one another. Dervishes and fakirs come under specific laws. And any one who feels himself unable to subscribe to any existing law may withdraw into the desert or into one of the many cave dwellings that are inhabited by hermits in Syria as also in the Taurus mountains, and live according to the mandates of his God.

Society is divided by caste and sect and tribe into an infinite number of groups, each one of which is following a law of its own, and howcer fantastic, to our thinking, that law may be, to the Oriental it is an ample and satisfactory explanation of all peculiarities. A man may go about in public veiled up to the eyes, or clad if he please only in a girdle: he will excite no remark. Why should he? Like every one else he is merely obeying his own law. So too the European may pass up and down the wildest places, encountering little curiosity and of criticism even less. The news he brings will be heard with interest, his opinions will be listened to with attention, but he will not be thought odd or mad, not even mistaken, because his practices and the ways of his thought are at variance with those of the people among whom he finds himself.<sup>1</sup>

Since Gertrude Bell wrote those words over thirty years ago much has changed, but even to-day the European travelling in lonely regions will meet with the same lack of intrusive curiosity and the same consideration. He may wander through the dim colourful streets of ibn Saud's seaport Jidda, the only person dressed in European clothes, without a single pair of eyes being raised to stare at him. He may camp by the wayside in Asia Minor and the peasants will pass close by with their oxen and their asses without casting so much as one furtive glance into the tent. When he realizes all this he will remember with a certain feeling of shame the intrusive and insistent curiosity with which an Indian or a Chinese or a Javanese woman is treated in his own country if she dares to walk through the streets in her native dress.

Nevertheless much has changed. With Western engineering,

<sup>1</sup> Gertrude Bell: *The Desert and the Sown*, Preface, p. x.

Western belief in the equality of man has found its way into the East, including the consequent principle of the right of peoples to self-determination. The Ottoman empire was like a vast, sometimes dilapidated, roof over peoples and Churches. Its Succession States are Nationalist States. In the Ottoman empire there was, in addition to the decadent Janissaries, one nation above all others from which the army was recruited—the Turks. A Nationalist State, on the other hand, must be able to rely upon the loyalty and the readiness to do military service of each one of its subjects. But this seems, and in fact is, impossible when the loyalty of these subjects is given to some completely different master—to priests in Kerbela, or to the Aga Khan in London, or to the Patriarch in Jerusalem. Hence the problem of national and religious minorities that causes such tremendous difficulties even in Europe is practically insoluble in Asia Minor. There are only two possible solutions—extermination or resettling whole communities in a fresh spot. Modern Turkey has used both methods, and has become a compact and homogeneous State. Iraq is attempting to do it by internal compromise. At the moment of writing it is just a year since the last political assassination was carried out in Iraq in the summer of 1937 when General Sidky Bekir, the Kurd, was murdered. Nevertheless it looks as if here, where there are only four different communities that carry any real weight, a peaceful settlement might be reached. In Syria, on the other hand, the situation looks hopeless, to say nothing of Palestine where a powerful minority has been newly imported through the creation of a Jewish National Home. For this reason it is especially the States which are tragically divided against themselves in which the desire for a single roof to cover everything is the most urgent and the Pan-Arabic ideal the most intense.

### III

## THE THIRD EUROPEAN INVASION AND THE WORLD WAR

*East is East and West is West  
And never the twain shall meet.*

[RUDYARD KIPLING]

It is not simply a matter of chance that these words were written in the nineteenth century and by the poet of British imperialism. For not until the nineteenth century were East and West so completely sundered that the gulf seemed unbridgeable. Historians of the nineteenth century have made the breach retrospective and stated it as an historic axiom, whereas a French king like François I thought it quite natural to ally himself with the Turkish Sultan against the German Emperor. Were not all three legitimate rulers whose interests in world politics happened to collide?

The breach between Orient and Occident—in former days the two were closely united if only by the alliteration of the names—has two roots that penetrate very deep. These are the French Revolution and the advance of technical knowledge. Before the French Revolution there had been various classes in Europe with special prerogatives. The Guilds as also the Universities lived according to their own regulations. No Government official might interfere with their ordinances. Bishops and archbishops and abbots ruled as temporal lords. Freemen of the Empire were in a different legal category from people subject to local rulers. Religious allegiance was stronger in many communities than political allegiance, as was shown by the settlement of Huguenots all over the world.

With the new principle 'liberty, equality, fraternity', all this came to an end. For let no one deceive himself. A part of Europe did indeed fight against France, the begetter of the new ideas.

But the ideas themselves have, despite wars and frontiers, become the common property of the whole of Europe; and only where Europe insensibly merges into Asia—in Russia and in the Ottoman empire—have they reluctantly come to a halt, though even here they have managed to filter through to some extent. All individuality in law and custom and clothing came to an end. Wigs were laid aside, as also the splendid, colourful, silken garb of the men. Thenceforward men wore short hair and long drab trousers. Only for jubilees and other festive occasions does the professor bring out his hood, the master craftsman the livery of his Guild. The middle-class woman is dressed like her aristocratic sisters, with whom she has suddenly been put on a level, and even the peasant woman has given up her beautiful old costume in the attempt to be 'like and equal'. The nobleman is no longer tried by his peers, a single 'common law' covers all the nationals of a State. Up to the time of the War, indeed, the highest nobility created a kind of separate existence for themselves apart from all this, and occasionally since the end of the War too, by voluntarily continuing to submit to certain laws abrogated by the State but which they still accepted as valid for themselves. Thus it was the aristocracy alone which carried on a 'European' tradition beyond the boundaries of nationalist States up to the most recent times. Even the much-vaunted internationality of science is to only a small extent still due to the old privileges and independence of European universities; and for the rest it is due to the new principle of general uniformity, and an almost complete abandonment of individual political thought which in times of crisis leads to deplorable perplexity and confusion.

In Europe allowance is made for the very real differences between people in two wholly distinct ways from which two movements have arisen which did not come seriously into conflict until after the World War. One method allows different sets of people to form themselves into Parties, which in its logical outcome leads by way of democracy to class warfare; and the return swing of the pendulum produces the class State, that is to say the rule of a single class in the State, and the principle of absolute, and this time enforced, equality. The other method recognizes and fosters the differences between races and peoples.

Its views lead by way of the latest European nationalist States of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to nationalism of the modern type, the logical outcome of which is again a return to the principle of absolute equality, this time by way of an indiscriminate *Gleichschaltung*<sup>1</sup> of beliefs, philosophy, and customs in all the members of a single nation.

All degrees of both tendencies have been imported into the East, without the ground having been previously prepared for them by a French Revolution. For this reason the problem of how to bring them into conformity is still one of the major difficulties of the Near Eastern States.

The second reason for the breach between East and West is the progress of European technical knowledge. In ancient times engineering was more advanced in the East. Our architects learnt the building of domes and arches from Asia. Darius's great highroad from Sardis to Susa, with a service of runners covering a distance of eighteen hundred miles in a fortnight was an achievement that has never been surpassed in Europe until the introduction of the air mail, that is to say, until after the War. The canal which he built between the Nile and Suez was a predecessor of the Suez Canal and fulfilled the same purpose. His marking of the road through the desert by the erection of stones at every quarter mile has outlasted the centuries, whereas a very few years' neglect would suffice to destroy the wooden signs placed once every three miles along the modern motor track between Damascus and Baghdad.

The Romans, who were the only people in the ancient world to make a definite division between East and West, went further in the technique of road- and dam-building. The famous weir at Shuster, one of Shahpur's works, which regulated the waters of the Karun right up to the twentieth century, was built about the year 260 B.C. by Roman prisoners, the river having first been completely diverted and the bed paved. The Romans were not the last. Muawiyeh, the Omayyad Caliph, established a postal system that was hardly inferior to that of Darius, and under one of his successors the postmasters were trained to act as Intelligence Officers. Registers of taxpayers in the Greek, Arabic,

<sup>1</sup> *Gleichschaltung* is a word almost impossible to translate—it means, roughly, levelling.

and Persian languages, the development of a special Turko-Persian language and writing for taxation purposes were a matter of course. Who would have thought of such a thing in Europe at that time? The first European ruler with a system of government approaching modern ideas was the Hohenstaufen emperor Frederick II. His knowledge was gained in the East and he put it into practice first in Sicily which was half Arab. And while a traveller in 1938 finds that Iranian money cannot be used across the border in Erzeroum or Istanbul, the coins of Darius were legal tender throughout the whole of the ancient world, and in the eleventh century the money orders of Malik Shah were cashed in Antioch as on the banks of the Oxus. The position of China and the approach to it were taught to Europeans by Eastern geographers, and the first Baedeker for Hither Asia was the road-book of the Postmaster General in the Abbassid caliphate.

With the Mongolian incursion, no doubt, much that had been fully developed was arrested and destroyed, especially in the east and south. But this is not to say that in the Near East technical and civilizatory attainments were from that time on at a complete standstill. The roads built by Shah Abbas in the sixteenth century made travelling general again, and his caravanserais situated at regular intervals along the main roads are among the finest and most beautiful of Iranian buildings. In the eighteenth century, again, Lady Montagu, the wife of the British Ambassador to the Sublime Porte, recounts the following from Turkey:

The smallpox, so fatal and so general amongst us is here entirely harmless by the invention of *ingrafting*, which is the term they give it. There is a set of old women who make it their business to perform the operation every autumn, in the month of September, when the great heat is abated. People send to one another to know if any of their family has a mind to have the smallpox: they make parties for this purpose and when they are met (commonly fifteen or sixteen together), the old woman comes with a nutshell full of the matter of the best sort of smallpox and asks what vein you please to have opened. She immediately rips open that you offer to her with a large needle (which gives you no more pain than a common scratch), and puts into the vein as much matter as can lye upon the head of her needle, and after that binds up the little



wound with a hollow bit of shell; and in this manner opens four or five veins. The Grecians have commonly the superstition of opening one in the middle of the forehead, one in each arm, and one on the breast, to match the sign of the Cross; but this has a very ill effect, all these wounds leaving little scars, and is not done by those that are not superstitious, who choose to have them in the legs, or that part of the arm that is concealed. The children or young patients play together all the rest of the day, and are in perfect health to the eighth. Then the fever begins to seize them, and they keep their beds two days, very seldom three. They have very rarely above twenty or thirty in their faces, which never mark; and in eight days' time they are as well as before their illness. Where they are wounded, there remain running sores during the distemper, which I don't doubt is a great relief to it. Every year thousands undergo this operation; and the French ambassador says pleasantly, that they take the smallpox here by way of diversion, as they take the waters in other countries. There is no example of any one that has died in it; and you may believe I am well satisfied of the safety of this experiment, since I intend to try it on my dear little son.<sup>1</sup>

The letter is dated 1717. In those days there were no Pasteur Institutes, no prizes for scientific work, no Press articles to praise every new advance made by man. Only a few old women with a needle and a nutshell full of lymph.

Not less interesting are Lady Montagu's other letters in comparison with the opinions of modern diplomatists' wives. While to-day in Iran social intercourse between European and Iranian families is practically non-existent and is confined almost exclusively to official occasions, while in other States association with the native population is often regarded as a tiresome duty, in those days the wives of the English and French ambassadors met the Turks on terms of equality—of course attended by great pomp, in State coaches, with numbers of servants and Janissaries. Lady Montagu gives detailed and colourful accounts of everything that strikes her as 'different', but without the undercurrent of feeling that anything that is 'different' must therefore be wrong, absurd, or inferior. People in England and Germany were still travelling by post-chaise and were exposed to the caprices of the weather, just as were Turks and Persians,

<sup>1</sup> Lord Wharnccliffe: *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, 1837. Vol. I, page 391.

whereas the Europeans of the nineteenth century grew accustomed to express trains and groaned aloud if the 'backward' East did not provide them with railways and bathrooms and up-to-date sanitation.

Thus the third European invasion of the Near East was up to the time of the World War less an invasion by force of arms than a so-called peaceful penetration. Objectives were no longer fortified places but key-positions for commerce. Railways, telegraph lines, shipping monopolies, oil concessions, have become the means of an indirect domination. In olden times wars were made quite openly for lust of land or power. Sultan Selim justified his campaigns on religious grounds. But modern European invasions are carried out under the banner of humanity and progress; to bring poor, pitiful, backward peoples out of their state of darkness. The 'poor things', who feel themselves to be infinitely superior in mode of life and in courtesy to their blunt and unceremonious invaders, are nevertheless nonplussed by the fact that these people can speak into a black tube and carry on a conversation across miles of intervening country.

Europeans know everything better than every one else and can do everything better than any one else. For a hundred years they have been nurturing in 'natives' a feeling of inferiority owing to their own attitude of superiority. It has been one means of consolidating their power. Nowadays it is turning on them and showing itself in an inferiority complex that is manifested sometimes in a hatred of foreigners, often in suspicion, and always in a great sensitiveness. How long will be needed before it can be eradicated again it is impossible to say. But it is a pleasure to meet with a certain ready friendliness in some of the new States that derives from a definite consciousness of national self-assurance.

## PRELUDE

. . . To approach as near as possible to Constantinople and India. Whoever governs there will be the true sovereign of the world. Consequently excite continual wars, not only in Turkey, but in Persia. Establish dockyards on the Black Sea, seize upon little pieces near this sea as well as on the Baltic, which is doubly necessary for the attainment of our project. And in the decadence

of Persia penetrate as far as the Persian Gulf, re-establish if it be possible the ancient commerce with the Levant, advance as far as India which is the depot of the world. Arrived at this point, we shall have no longer need of English gold.

To interest the house of Austria in driving the Turk out of Europe, to neutralize her jealousies at the moment of the conquest of Constantinople, either by exciting her to war with the Great Powers of Europe, or by giving her a portion of the conquest, which we will retake from her at a later period.

Sweden being dismembered, Persia subjugated, Poland crushed, Turkey conquered, our army reunited, the Black Sea and Baltic guarded by our ships, we must then propose separately, and very secretly, first to the Court of Versailles, then to that of Vienna, to share with them the empire of the universe. . . .<sup>1</sup>

The astonishing words quoted above are paragraphs IX, XI, and XIII of the will of Peter the Great. Historians are still disputing as to whether it is or is not his will. But at all events it is an excellent summary of Russian aims, not only in the eighteenth but also in the nineteenth century. And up to the time of the Bolshevik revolution this document was to be found among the private papers of every Russian ambassador.

Peter the Great himself took the first step towards the realization of his plans. Persia was disunited. The south was under Afghan rule, the last descendant of the Safavids was making a desperate effort to maintain himself in the north. Russia declared itself in favour of the legitimate Safavid Shah and marched in to Derbent, the Gate of the Caucasus. Resht and Baku on the Caspian Sea were occupied. The Ottoman empire was, however, still a Great Power, which demanded to be taken into account. While the Russians were conquering the eastern districts, Turkish troops occupied Georgia with its capital Tiflis in the north-west. The two armies now confronted one another. Instead, however, of continuing the invasion by a Russo-Turkish war, the two Powers concluded an agreement that indicated the partition of Persia. Russia was allotted the provinces along the Caspian Sea, the Ottoman empire the provinces around Tabriz, Hamadan, and Kermanshah. The two Powers succeeded in the next few years in occupying a part of these territories, but with the rise of Nadir Shah of the House of

<sup>1</sup> After Sykes: *History of Persia*, Vol. II, pp. 245-6.

Afshar (1732-47) Persia was able to reconquer all that had been taken by Russia and part of the districts occupied by Turkey.

The second phase of the Russian invasion of Persian territory at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth proceeded without interference from Turkey. Constantinople was otherwise engaged and the Russians had the field to themselves. First they marched into Georgia, in the year 1795. The fortunes of war were varying. The disputes over the Russian throne found repercussions among the high command. But from 1804 onwards the Russians advanced. In 1812 the decisive battle was fought. In 1813 came the Treaty of Gulistan. Persia ceded Georgia, Daghestan, Mingrelia, Imeretia and Abkhasia, Derbent and Baku, Shirwan, Shaki, and Karabagh. Persia agreed not to keep a fleet in the Caspian—when this point was under discussion one of the Persian diplomatists said: 'What use is salt water to us?' And so the Caspian Sea became Russian.

Meanwhile in Europe a very different personage had come on the scene and was giving a new aspect to the whole of Near Eastern politics—Napoleon Bonaparte. If the French Revolution sets a period in the relations between East and West on the spiritual plane, it was the mighty son of this revolution who indicated the lines along which imperialism was to move in the nineteenth century, in so far as it progressed by force of arms and not by monetary and commercial concessions.

Napoleon's arch-enemy was England. All his undertakings, therefore, were directed towards one end—checkmating England. Like Peter the Great, he realized that India is Britain's most vulnerable point. He attacked in two places—in Egypt and in Persia. A consequence of the Egyptian campaign—which was unsuccessful in so far as Napoleon's plans were concerned—was that the dying Mameluke rule under Ottoman supremacy was startled from its slumbers, that an officer—Mehemet Ali—made himself the new master of Egypt, that the son of this Mehemet Ali—Ibrahim Pasha—conquered Syria thirty years later and occupied Cilicia as far as Adana and Tarsus. That was one of the first—though temporary—weakening of the Ottoman rule in Asia, and at the same time the preliminary to the

sundering of Egypt from Turkey by the English occupation in the 'eighties.

From Egypt Napoleon proceeded to Syria, stormed Jaffa and was prevented by England from taking Acre. This was the overture to the French occupation of Syria after the World War, for from that time on the French regarded the eastern Mediterranean coastal districts as their sphere of influence. French Consular Agents 'remained in Syria after the French evacuation of the country', wrote Rawlinson, 'and continued for many years to pursue a restless course of political adventure, spreading in the sequel a perfect network of intrigue over the whole face of western Asia.'<sup>1</sup> Evidently the Englishman was disturbed.

Napoleon's second advance on India took a more complicated and fantastic turn. It was carried out by diplomatic means, first directed against England and Russia jointly, but after the Peace of Tilsit in alliance with Russia. During the years 1802-4 French agents prepared the ground in Teheran. In 1806, after the outbreak of war with Russia, a French mission was sent to Teheran. Monsieur Joubert was instructed to bring forward the following proposals—Napoleon declared himself ready to pay a subsidy to the Persian army and to dispatch an auxiliary force to help in the reconquest of Georgia if the Shah would invade India with French assistance.

The breach between East and West was not yet complete. The Shah still felt that he was on an equal footing with others of his own monarchical rank; he had no wish to enter into an alliance with a nation that had murdered its king, and at the first interview he merely asked the French representative: 'How are you? How is Bonaparte?' Not, as he might have said: 'How is His Majesty, the Emperor of the French?' And finally: 'Why did you kill your king?' Besides, he was still waiting for an answer from England to the question which he had put in 1804—was England prepared to stand by Persia? The English Cabinet had been discussing that question for two years without reaching any conclusion—their deliberations were indeed dilatory.

Since meanwhile the Russian danger in north Persia was growing more and more acute, the Shah consigned his monarchist principles to oblivion and in his turn sent an embassy to

<sup>1</sup> Rawlinson, after Sykes, *History of Persia*, Vol. II, p. 303.

the French Court at Tilsit. The Franco-Russian war was not yet over, so it was decided to make war on Russia jointly and to invade India jointly. The result of this agreement in May 1807 was known as the Treaty of Finckenstein. A French military mission under General Gardanne was sent to Teheran to train the Persian army for the Indian campaign.

Everything bid fair to come to a satisfactory end, but in July the Peace of Tilsit was signed and Napoleon and Tsar Alexander came to an agreement over the East. The disappointed Shah saw his hopes of regaining the northern provinces with the help of the French fade. Napoleon, on the other hand, saw his prospects improving.

Buonaparte adroitly seized the opportunity of the Peace of Tilsit to induce Alexander to send an army to Persia in the following spring. This army was to join forces with a French army which should proceed through Constantinople and Asia Minor, and crossing Persia from there should organize the troops which the Court of Isfahan was for its part to provide, and to initiate some act of hostility against the possessions of the East India Company.

So says a contemporary official document. (After Sykes.)

As early as 1801 the Tsar Paul, Alexander's predecessor, had commanded a band of Cossacks to advance on India. The advance ceased with his death. But there seemed no reason why the plan should not be resurrected. The geographical knowledge which would have been necessary to show the impossibility of its being carried out was lacking both to the Russians and the French. Napoleon no doubt thought that what an Alexander could do, he could do.

The English, who knew enough of the country to realize the impracticability of the plan, were none the less gravely disturbed. When India is in question the English lose their proverbial phlegm and become anxious and alert. Moreover, the Franco-Russian was not the first threat to India that had shaken their equanimity in the past few years. In 1798 the Afghan question had for the first time arisen as a bogey before the Governments of London and India. In the unsettled conditions prevailing in this country, it has presented a different aspect at different times, but always an aspect that seemed hazardous to India. At one time a mighty man might reign in Kabul, who lusted after conquest

and gave rise to apprehension lest he should fall upon India by force of arms. At other times the Government in Kabul was so weak that there was fear of a victorious Persian invasion in Afghanistan. That would once again open the doors to Russian influence in Afghanistan which would be worse than anything.

The 1798 affair was of the first type. Zaman Shah, the lord of Kabul, announced his intention of proceeding to India. In order to frustrate this and at the same time to combat the only partially realized French danger, Captain Malcolm was sent to Teheran by the English Government. He was an ambitious and energetic young man. He took pains to study the character of the Persians, and once he had discovered that presents produced a good effect, he was most generous with his gifts. The result of his efforts was a first treaty of alliance. The Shah agreed not to make peace with the Emir of Afghanistan so long as he did not renounce his intentions upon India. Any French subjects who wished to settle in Persia were either expelled or exterminated. This was six years before the first official French mission. England declared itself ready to provide the Shah with war materials in case Persia should be attacked by the Afghans or the French. An advantageous commercial treaty was of course added to the political one, including the entry into Persia duty free of British cloth, iron, steel, and lead; and the permission for English and Indian traders to settle free of taxation in the Persian harbour towns.

The English emissary could hardly have done more. Nevertheless the good effect of the first Malcolm mission was nullified by the failure already mentioned of the Cabinet in London to make up its mind on the question of coming to the help of Persia against France and Russia. Thus arose the situation of the year 1807, with the threat to India of a joint Russo-French invasion.

Negotiations were now initiated from two points simultaneously—from the Government in London, and from Lord Minto as Governor General of the British East India Company in Calcutta. London sent out Sir Harford Jones, who had formerly been British Resident in Basra and knew local conditions. The Indian Government sent the experienced Malcolm, who had meanwhile been advanced to the rank of Brigadier General.

Malcolm was the first to arrive. This time he did not do as well as he had done before. His manner had grown a trifle arrogant. The Persians refused to stomach it, especially since their self-esteem was now growing inflated as a result of General Gardanne's activities—troops were being drilled and fortifications erected, and hopes were being awakened that Georgia might yet be reconquered. Malcolm was, therefore, treated with a certain insolence. He was not even granted permission to go as far as Teheran. He returned to India in a fury and suggested that the Persian island of Kharak at the head of the Gulf should be occupied by Indian troops.

Meanwhile the London emissary, Sir Harford Jones, had made his appearance. He was so far favoured by fortune that since Malcolm's departure a change of feeling against General Gardanne had taken place in Teheran. Such a thing may very easily happen if excessive hopes are disappointed or vanities are wounded by an impatient word. The Persians had realized that they would not regain Georgia either with the help of French training for their troops or by means of French diplomatic support. Sir Harford, on the other hand, brought not only the offer of British military instructors and an alliance with England, but also a fine diamond for the Shah, and the promise to pay one hundred and sixty thousand toman a year as long as England was at war with Russia. General Gardanne was thereupon handed his and his suite's passports.

Despite these successes Lord Minto was not pleased. He was chagrined at the non-success of his own emissary. He was chagrined at Sir Harford Jones's independence of action, since Sir Harford was, after all, officially subordinate to him. He refused to pay Sir Harford's bills, and relieved him of his functions. Sir Harford became abusive. The fact was repeated to Lord Minto, for the East is a vast hive of gossip.

At this point a small digression must be made in order to explain a peculiarity of English politics, without the knowledge of which all England's actions in the Near East, its successes and its failures, are incomprehensible. This is the antagonism between the Indian Government and the Government in London. In those early days the lack of unanimity which sometimes developed into serious differences may be explained by the great



distance and the difficulties of communication. The man on the spot in each case was obliged to act on his own initiative, otherwise his decision might be too late. But this independence of action has remained even since steamship, railway, telegraph, and the wireless have come to make communication rapid. The real fact of the matter is that the world wears a very different aspect when seen from India than it does when viewed from London. The East India Company had grown accustomed to rule on Oriental lines; London, on the other hand, acted according to the methods of European diplomacy. While Afghanistan had always belonged to the Indian department, Persia was only allotted to Calcutta in the year 1828. In other words, until 1828 Persia was reckoned to be on equal terms with other nations, one with whom negotiations could be carried on directly. From that year onwards it became a second-class Power. Even during the War the British military missions suffered from the discord. Sir Percy Sykes championed the Indian Government, Sir William Malleson the other side. The confusion that arises at times may best be explained in the words of Sir Ormsby Gore, afterwards Secretary of State for the Colonies:

We found at the outset that for Cyprus, British Somaliland, and Zanzibar, the Colonial Office was responsible, and the British officers were agents of the Colonial Office. Then for the Persian Gulf, for Mesopotamia, and for very nearly half of the regions of the Red Sea, the Government of India and its agents were responsible. At the beginning of the War the political direction of the admiral in the Red Sea was under the Government of India, and later on there was a new demarcation of spheres of influence between the India Office and the Foreign Office. To start with, the Arabian Peninsula, including the Red Sea right up to Suez, was still under the Government of India, and the area now forming the kingdom of Hejaz was placed under the High Commissioner at Cairo and through him under the Foreign Office. Sir Mark Sykes quoted in the House of Commons one of the most famous instances of how things sometimes break down. It had reference to negotiations between the High Commissioner in Cairo and the King of Hejaz with whom we completed a treaty about Kunfidah, a small town on the Red Sea coast. It was very interesting to see what happened, the way in which imperial business is done. The political officer in the Red Sea communicated with his chief in Aden, who communicated with the Foreign Department of the Indian Government at Simla, which communicated with the

India Office in London, who sent across to the Foreign Office to communicate with the High Commissioner in Cairo, and the reply went back through the same channels. The duration of time for the transmission of the telegrams, apart from the discussion of the decision, amounted to eighteen days.<sup>1</sup>

This is another example in favour of co-operation between the various services. When each office acts independently the result is what is to be seen in Palestine at the present moment—promises to the Arabs, promises to the Jews, territorial agreements with the French, all arranged in the name of the British Government by men in official positions, all incompatible with one another, all made in good faith and yet giving ground for justifiable complaints of English perfidy.

To return to the English negotiations with Persia. The Government of India finally agreed to the conditions arranged by Sir Harford Jones, but demanded that an emissary of its own should finally conclude the treaty. General Malcolm was once more sent out. This time he was excellently well received, the officers of his staff remained in Persia as successors to the Gardanne mission, and the tallest of them, Lindsay Bethune, became Commander-in-Chief of the Persian army. In November 1814 the agreement was signed. Its conditions were—a defensive alliance between England and Persia; all Persian treaties with European nations directed against England to be null and void; no European armies having intentions hostile to Great Britain to be permitted upon Persian soil; the Shah to undertake to influence his eastern neighbours in Bokhara, Samarkand, Tataristan and Kwarazm in the same sense; mutual assistance in case of attack; British support in the delimitation of the Russo-Persian frontier; English subsidies to Persia to the extent of two hundred thousand toman a year, which should only cease if Persia undertook a war of aggression; the money to be spent under the supervision of the English Minister.

The treaty which, taken together with the influence of the British military mission, may be looked upon as a curtailment of Persia's complete independence, begins with the charming sentence: 'These happy leaves are a nosegay plucked from the thornless garden of concord and tied by the hands of the

<sup>1</sup> Journal of the Central Asian Society, February 1920.

plenipotentiaries. . . .<sup>1</sup> A truly Oriental method of wrapping up unpleasant facts in flowery language, thereby almost leading to forgetfulness of their meaning.

The older the century grew, the gloomier became facts for Persia. The training of the Persian army by European instructors, whether Russian, French, or English, in no degree improved their fighting value. An impressive parade step was, it is true, drilled into them, but what had made the superiority of the Persians—the mobility of their horsemen against larger bodies of troops—was lost. Rawlinson, who himself acted as British instructor, says:

. . . in presenting Persia with the boon of a so-called regular army, and in order to reclaim her from her unlawful loves with France, we clothed her in the robes of Nessus.<sup>2</sup>

This was assuredly only partly due to the foreign officers, and for the rest to the fact that there was a lack of money to provide regular pay, food, and uniforms.

In 1825 a new Perso-Russian war broke out, owing to differences of opinion regarding the interpretation of the last peace treaty. The Persians fought well, but the Commander-in-Chief made mistakes and the Shah was unwilling to provide money for the war. The Russians won and the Persians were obliged to agree to the Peace of Turkomanchai in 1828. It not only took from them the fertile provinces of Erivan and Nakchevan and extracted from them an indemnity of three million pounds, but in addition it foreshadowed the beginning of capitulations in Persia, that is to say it ushered in a century of the curtailment of the Persians' liberty of action within their own country. The Russians had thenceforward the power not only to control their own nationals but also to protect Persian nationals in the Russian service, that is to say to withdraw them from Persian legislative authority. Free imports allowed to Russian officials implied the thin end of a wedge, hard to control, thrust into the Persian Customs system. In time all the other Great Powers acquired similar and even more extensive rights.

<sup>1</sup> After Sykes, *History of Persia*, Vol. II, p. 309 n.

<sup>2</sup> Rawlinson, after Sykes, *History of Persia*, Vol. II. pp. 411-12.

England was in an awkward position. According to the treaty of 1814 she was Persia's ally and was pledged to help in case of attack. However, as has so often happened, the problem was solved by means of money. Articles Three and Four of the treaty of alliance were cancelled in consideration of a payment of two hundred thousand tomans. The department of Persian affairs was put under the Government of India. Persia became a second-class nation.

There is a certain tragedy in observing how in all these negotiations, wars, and peace treaties the Persian Government lost its feeling for the relative importance of nations in the world of politics. Because the whole Persian people trembled when the Shah appeared in his 'garment of wrath', in blood-red robes and a crown of rubies, the Shah believed that the Russians too would tremble and withdraw their troops. At the time of the Persian-Afghan war in 1838 the Shah believed that England was so dependent upon Persian friendship that he might with impunity insult the British Ambassador. The British Ambassador withdrew from intercourse with the Court. The Shah sent an emissary named Hussein Khan to England, to demand the removal of the Englishman. Lord Palmerston refused even to recognize the Persian as a diplomatic agent and demanded, on the contrary, an apology from Persia. Since the Shah was no longer able to wreak his blind fury upon the Englishman, Hussein Khan was given the benefit of it in the *bastinado*—as the native expression has it, he was made to eat many sticks.

The people themselves possibly had a better understanding of what was going on than the Shah, whose only thought was for his treasure, and the eunuchs, whose sole concern was for the preservation of their influence over the Shah. After the Treaty of Turkomanchai the Russian Envoy Extraordinary who was charged with collecting the fines was murdered in the Russian Legation at Teheran. He had demanded that two Armenian women should be transferred to him from the harem of a high official. They were transferred, but those learned in theological law declared that it was permissible to rescue them. The bazaars were closed, a mob assembled; all the employees of the Russian Legation were cut to pieces. Of the Minister himself only a hand on one finger of which was his well-known emerald ring

was found among the pile of corpses. He was the famous writer of comedies, Griboyedoff. And the Russian author Tyanov, who devoted a book to the whole episode, states that the English Minister and the representatives of the East India Company incited the populace against Russia. It is possible. Nevertheless the English officers then working in Persia also felt themselves to be surrounded day and night by envy, hatred, and sabotage.

After the defeat of Napoleon, France was out of the running in the race for predominance in Persia. Turkey was, it is true, still making rectifications of the frontier, but only with the permission of the European Powers. There remained, therefore, only two—England and Russia. And they were hostile to one another in Persia until the outbreak of the World War, which found them fighting side by side in spite of it.

England fought a minor war with Persia—no one took any notice. England forbade the Persians to occupy Herat—who troubled about it? Russia, in campaigns lasting over twenty years slowly advanced southwards along the eastern shores of the Caspian and captured a Persian frontier territory—no one ever heard of it. The country that fought successfully against Greeks and Romans and Turks, the strongest Powers of their day, sank to the status of a semi-colonial Power. No longer was it an equal. It became a collection of spheres of influence.

Turkey, on the other hand, for a long time took up a totally different attitude, at least in so far as the Asiatic parts were concerned. She had stronger powers of resistance despite internal disruption. And not only that. She was less remote and therefore a greater number of Powers was interested in her. Hence it was more difficult for the Russians in this case to advance even partially along the road prescribed by Peter the Great, although the subjugation of the Turks was more important to Russia than anything else, for the sake of the entrance to the Dardanelles. The Russian Chancellor, Nesselrode, tried to console himself by saying that a weakened Turkish empire might be more useful than a non-existent one.

'The idea of driving the Turks out of Europe and restoring the cult of the true God in Santa Sofia is certainly very beautiful . . .' he wrote to Prince Lieven, 'but what would Russia

gain by it? Undoubtedly glory, but at the same time the loss of all the real advantages assured to her by the neighbourhood of a state weakened by many wars, and inevitable conflict with the chief Powers of Europe.<sup>1</sup> And though at the very same time Lord Aberdeen, in an access of pessimism, abandoned the erstwhile trend of English politics and believed that it was impossible for him to save the 'clumsy fabric of barbarous power' from destruction, England nevertheless remained true to Wellington's principle that 'the Ottoman Empire stands not for the benefit of the Turks but of Christian Europe', until the outbreak of the World War. And the same Prince Lieven to whom Nesselrode wrote the letter quoted above received one written jointly by the Duke of Wellington and Lord Dudley, saying:

The Ottoman Empire is not a country like some of those whose example we could cite within our own times, which after having been invaded, resume their domestic tranquillity and their political existence upon the retreat of the invaders; once broken up, its capital taken and its provinces in rebellion, the recomposition of it as an independent state would be a work scarcely within the reach of human integrity and human skill. A new order of things must arise in those countries of which it now consists. What that order would be it is vain to conjecture, but we may venture to foretell that a final adjustment would not take place till after a series of troubles and disasters, for which the greatest benefits that could be supposed to arise from it could not for many years afford a sufficient compensation.<sup>2</sup>

So the 'Sick Man of Europe' came into existence. His Christian provinces in Europe—Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, Rumania, Montenegro, Albania—gradually defected. Russia supported every revolt and at intervals gave help by armed intervention. The Concert of the Powers obstructed progress wherever possible. And the rivalry between Austria and Russia in the Balkans, and that between Russia and England over the Straits question brought about a certain balance of power on the European side.

As soon as Asia came into the affair, however, England took stronger measures. The invasion of Syria by Ibrahim Pasha, the heir to the Egyptian throne, aroused grave displeasure in

<sup>1</sup> cit. Seton Watson: *Britain in Europe*, p. 137.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 126.

London. For behind Mehemet Ali the father and Ibrahim Pasha the son were French money, French military instructors, and the French desire for influence in the eastern Mediterranean. In 1839 Sultan Mahmud declared war on his Egyptian viceroy. He suffered a shattering defeat. England and Austria in agreement with Prussia and Russia sent battleships to help Constantinople. Mehemet Ali was turned out of Syria. The Crimean War brought about a second intervention on the part of England together with the European Powers in favour of Turkey. Russia was obliged thenceforward to resign to the Concert of the Powers its role as protector of the Greeks in the Turkish empire. A third intervention resulted after the Treaty of San Stefano in 1878; the Russians ceded a part of Armenia in return for which England secured for itself the island of Cyprus. These interventions led up to the Congress of Berlin at which Germany for the first time took an active part in the discussion of Asiatic affairs.

All these disturbances, the losses in territory and power, gradually induced in the Turkish empire as they had done in Persia a condition of internal defencelessness, disruption, and poverty, that proved to be preliminary to the 'peaceful penetration' which now began. This attack was conducted not with weapons of war, troops, battleships, but with money, extra-territoriality, concessions, more money, capitulations, trading monopolies, and still more money.

#### COMMERCIAL IMPERIALISM WITH DIPLOMATIC PRESSURE

The first and most important foundations of the privileged position of Europeans in Asia are capitulations. They have nothing to do with capitulation but only with the headings of chapters (Latin: *capita*, chapter). They are not a tricky European contrivance, but an example of the good old Oriental custom referred to above, that each community shall live according to its own laws. While the Greeks were still masters of Constantinople the Turks had a small colony there which lived under its own *cadi* according to the Moslem law. When Mahomet II conquered Constantinople not only was the Greek population allowed to keep its Patriarch as head of the Church

and the Law, but the Genoese in Galata and the Venetians were given permission to live in certain districts according to their old customs. Gradually such agreements were made not only with those actually concerned, the people on the spot, but with the Powers interested in these communities as vassals or fellow-countrymen. The model of such agreements was that between Suleiman and François I made in the year 1535. All subsequent ones were copied from this. Originally all capitulations were regarded as expiring with the death of a ruler and then renewable. But from 1740 onwards they were concluded *in perpetuo*. Everybody understood the use of these agreements and they worked excellently, as long as they were carried out under the original conditions.

However, at about the turn of the century, Europeans discovered that all men were free and equal and therefore must live according to the same Law. Such progress in human enlightenment must not be withheld from the Turks. As a reward for fighting so dutifully in the Crimean War, a noteworthy edict was issued to them in 1856, called Hatti Humayum. In it all the subjects of the empire were made equal. It was forbidden to favour one religious community rather than another; all citizens had the same right to be employed at the Porte and to attend school; foreigners might acquire land; mixed Moslem-Christian tribunals were set up; and since all men were now equal, Christians must also do military service unless they preferred to buy themselves off. The Christians were furious, for though they were quite happy to live under Ottoman rule, they did not feel themselves to be of one blood with the Turks and had no desire whatsoever to shed their blood for them in the interminable wars. The Moslems were furious too, for these new regulations were against all their principles and were, moreover, regarded as alien impositions. The representatives of the Great Powers did not allow themselves to be turned from their course by these difficulties. Their intentions were excellent.

It must be assumed that they really did mean well and that in the innocence of their Western superiority they considered neither the consequences nor the inconsequence of their actions. They saw that conditions were bad in Turkey, especially in Constantinople with which they were familiar. To remedy these



they could only suggest the introduction of their own scarcely tried practices.

The inconsequence of their actions lay in the fact that though they forced upon the Turks one law for all, they continued to reserve to themselves the further existence of a special law—the old system of capitulations, a Turkish invention which was still good enough for the progressive Europeans.

That meant that the nationals of the Powers were not subject to any Turkish court. No Turkish policeman had the right to search a house without the consent of the Consul. After 1868, it is true, the Turks, pointing out the injustice of these legal differences, were able to insist that in remote parts of the empire and in certain circumstances foreigners must be subject to Turkish law and the Turkish police, but only in the presence of their consular interpreter. The interpreter must sign every protocol, otherwise it was not valid. The interpreter thus became a powerful person, and was apt to make use of his power, against his own people and in favour of his foreign employers.

In practice all this meant that foreigners could not be punished. They could do as they liked. Where was the Consul prepared to make life difficult for himself in order that his compatriots should live virtuously? His place was to help them, not to prosecute them. Foreigners thus protected were not, however, only decent English, French, or German merchants. Included among them were all those who had not done well at home, the ne'er-do-wells who found a paradise here. Included, further, were all other protégés of the Great Powers. England protected Indians and Africans and Arabs and Cyprian Greeks. France, with its partiality for Syria, protected the Syrian Christians, that is to say Greeks and Maronites and Armenians, those people, in fact, to whom the generic name of Levantines is given, the wildest of all cut-throats.

Thus throughout the Ottoman empire—and the Ottoman empire was large, including as it did Mesopotamia and Arabia, Syria, Asia Minor and officially also Egypt—arose a privileged and overweening class of people. In Pera and Galata, the European suburbs of Stambul, gambling dens and brothels, dance halls and bars of a degree of dissoluteness that would be tolerated in no European State came into existence. The Porte could

do nothing to prevent it. And probably the Europeans as a rule never even realized that it was a consequence of capitulations.

The second important foundation for the European position of predominance was the fact that loans were granted. In earlier days the Government in Constantinople had remedied its difficulties by debasing the currency and issuing paper money when necessary. That naturally was not a course to be adopted by an up-to-date Great Power. Hence after the Crimean War, which had been very expensive, a loan of seven million pounds sterling was raised. The building of military roads and harbours, the improvement of the postal system, again cost money. The first English loan, therefore, was followed by three further ones in 1858, 1860, and 1861. The interest was high, expenditure increased, the budget showed fourteen million pounds outgoings and only nine millions income. The issue of several million pounds' worth of paper money at a fixed rate could not fill the gap. Under Sultan Abd-ul-Aziz extravagance at Court was added to the increasing State expenditure. The Russo-Turkish war of 1877-8 still further intensified the financial complications, and by the year 1881 the debt had reached the sum of two hundred and fifty million pounds. The creditor countries now combined, a German official was appointed, a certain abatement of liabilities was granted and the famous 'Ottoman Debt' came into being; it festered like a wound for years until, after the War, it was divided up among the Successor States to the Ottoman empire.

France, Germany, England, Italy, and Austria-Hungary, were the shareholders in this 'Dette Publique Ottomane'. It became the most powerful institution in the empire, because certain taxes and import duties were earmarked for it, and, not content to receive these moneys from the hands of the Turkish fiscal authorities, it went to the source and collected its own taxes. Thus the Ottoman empire no longer had the right to administer its revenues as it thought fit, but only with the concurrence of the Powers. And if one Power wished to increase certain taxes in order to build a railway, all the other Powers came quickly to demand concessions too. Haggling went on behind Turkey's back. One secured the tobacco monopoly, another the harbour monopoly, a third the monopoly for the

manufacture of the fez. And each time the 'Sick Man' grew a shade weaker, and each time peaceful penetration by the various Powers went a little deeper.

Nor were foreign nationals who made money out of the various monopolies and concessions made to pay taxes. Freedom from taxation is an important principle of capitulations. In a country like Egypt it remained in force as a legacy of the Ottoman empire until the Capitulations Conference of Montreux in 1936. As another of the privileges under capitulations, the following Powers established their own postal system throughout the country—England, Germany, France, Italy, Austria-Hungary, and Russia. This was in order that the inviolability of correspondence might be preserved. The result was a loss of income for Turkey and, furthermore, an easy loophole for aliens as well as Turkish subjects not merely to escape the censorship but also to escape the vigilance of Customs officials.

In Persia matters were rather different. Capitulations were not such an ancient institution. Before the nineteenth century very few foreigners lived on Iranian soil, and special terms were made with each of them. Once the idea had been admitted in principle, however, after the Russo-Persian Peace Treaty of Turkomanchai in 1828, it was adopted by all and extended in the most comprehensive fashion.

The financial sphere provided a field for adventurers in Teheran even more than in Constantinople. The great empire was still to a large extent unexplored and its treasures unknown. Fantastic plans were made for their exploitation. More than one company was formed to work nickel, copper, gold, and silver mines. But they all came to grief over difficulties of labour and transport. Moreover, the administrative system, which had at times been purged and improved by the influx of new honesty in the days of the 'conquests', was now debased to a degree which left the Ottoman administration as a model of respectability.

In 1871 the Persian Vizir and the English Baron Julius de Reuter determined to set the country on its feet again by the creation of a gigantic commercial trust. Railways were to be built, a National Bank was to be established, the mines should render up their treasures, and the Customs duties and taxes should serve as security for them. The undertaking was known

as the Reuter Concession. In the same year, however, Shah Nasr-u-Din made his first trip to Europe, and discovered in St. Petersburg that the Russians were very angry at the concession. To his surprise he found no one in London eager to help him against the Russians but was met with indifference. So he went back home and revoked the concession. The hundred thousand pound preliminary payment made by Baron Reuter of course remained in Persia; it had no doubt long since been spent.

Baron Reuter was disgusted. However, in 1889, he was granted a new concession for the establishment of a Bank. This became known as the Imperial Bank of Persia and had the sole right of note issue. In this way the Persian finances came into English hands. A mining company for the exploitation of precious stones, gold, and silver was founded and went bankrupt. A tobacco monopoly was created, but the arrogance of its officials in addition to the unfair advantage taken of the privileges that were granted led to outbursts of hatred against foreigners. The most influential Mujtehid put an embargo on smoking for all the faithful, and they all voluntarily submitted to the ban, including the imperial Court. The Shah rescinded the tobacco monopoly. The indemnity that had to be paid for this was lent by the Imperial Bank of Persia and formed the beginning of the Persian National Debt.

The Russians of course did not wish to lag behind England. They founded the Banque des Prêts, later called Banque d'Escompte de Perse. They had none of the inhibitions to overcome with which every Persian loan in the City of London was faced. English business men have never been of the opinion that a sound imperial policy can be based upon money thrown away. For Russia, however, the question was even then an affair of State, and the State does not reckon profit and loss upon a purely monetary basis. It throws politics into the scales. Thus the Banque d'Escompte de Perse worked at a loss, but by means of mortgage loans it laid its hands upon a great part of Persian property.

In 1896 Shah Nasr-u-Din was murdered. His supposed hoard of gold was not to be found. The heir to the throne was in want of money. He wished to undergo medical treatment in Europe. A long discussion resulted in a first Russian loan of thirty-two

and a half million roubles in the year 1900. The debt on the tobacco monopoly was repaid to the Imperial Bank of Persia out of this money, for the Russians wished to break the English financial hold. After certain other debts had also been paid off, very little money remained. This little was, of course, not invested productively, but was used in paying arrears of salaries and in other requirements. Hence in the following year a new loan of ten million roubles was needed. It was paid for by granting a concession for building a road from the Russian frontier in Julfa by Mount Ararat through Tabriz to Teheran. It was along this road that the Russian troops moved before and during the World War.

Next the Russians attacked the Customs system. Hitherto the most important Customs houses had been leased by the Persian Government to notables or tribal chiefs. There was no actual tariff system. Europeans paid five per cent according to agreement. The native merchants took each case as it came up and bargained for terms with the local tax-farmer. Both parties revelled in this kind of haggling. The negotiations were elaborately carried on according to definite rules rather like a game of chess. In the interior of the country goods were usually subject to further duties. In order to bring about a reform a Belgian Inspector of Customs was appointed in 1898. He was a most conscientious man and within two years increased the revenue from the Persian Customs by fifty per cent.

But the Belgians were in league with the Russians. The Russians wished to effect an increase in the tariff in order to secure their second loan. Preparations were made in complete secrecy; in 1902 a Perso-Russian Convention was signed, and in February 1903 it was published. The duties on the chief Russian imports—petroleum and sugar—were lowered from five per cent to one and a half per cent and two and a half per cent, while the duties on English imports such as tea were raised from five per cent to one hundred per cent. The English were dismayed. However, after some hesitation, they followed suit and also concluded a Customs agreement with Persia.

While the 'neutral' Belgians worked together with the Russians, the 'neutral' Shuster mission was looked upon with favour in England. Mr. W. Morgan Shuster was an American.

He was appointed financial adviser by the Shah in 1911. He demanded and was given plenipotentiary powers. He occupied himself not only with the administration of purely Persian finances but also with the Belgian tariff system. The Belgians were vexed. The Russians were very much more vexed. For if the Persian finances were put in order and the country became independent again, they would have spent many millions of roubles in vain. A 'clash' occurred between some Russian Cossacks who had meanwhile been installed and the Shuster police force. The Russians delivered an ultimatum demanding the removal of Shuster. The Persian Parliament rejected the ultimatum, and in Tabriz a minor Russo-Persian war broke out. The Russians marched on Teheran. The Teheran Government gave way. Mr. Morgan Shuster took his departure and published his experiences in a book bearing the significant title: *The Strangling of Persia*.

A third neutral organization was established in Persia in 1911—the Swedish gendarmerie. It did splendid work and began to bring some sort of order into the country. During the War it inclined towards the German side, which brought from Sir Percy Sykes, whose duty it was to combat it, the words:

. . . In view of the fact that in the north a Cossack brigade trained by Russian officers had been in existence for nearly a generation, it would have been fitting to entrust this task to British officers. The mistake then made cost us very dear.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from this mistake, nevertheless, Britain guarded its interests well. For meanwhile, in 1907, an Anglo-Russian agreement had been signed to put an end to the mutual hostility in Central Asia and the Near East. Its real purpose was not, as a matter of fact, achieved, but on the other hand it smoothed the way for the partition of Persia.

The English Ambassador who negotiated this proposal at St. Petersburg with Iswolsky, the Foreign Minister, was Sir Arthur Nicolson. The two years which he spent at the British Embassy in Teheran as Chargé d'Affaires were his first independent work. The experience gained there was the foundation for his later political views. His son epitomizes them as follows:

<sup>1</sup> Sykes: *History of Persia*, Vol. II, p. 469.

He learnt, for instance, that the advance of Russia towards the Indian frontier was no mere Cossack adventurism but some slow tidal movement, imponderable and discontinuous. He learnt, that is, that the policy of supporting the independence and integrity of Persia and Afghanistan was little more than an expedient, and even, as such, an expedient which might tempt us to assume responsibilities which we could not execute or to encourage hopes which we should be unable to fulfil. He saw that this policy exposed Great Britain and Russia to constant local friction, and to the ever present menace of hostilities in Central Asia. He passed through various phases. At one stage he advocated our withdrawing to a more defensible line, abandoning northern and central Persia to Russian influence and consolidating our position in Fars and on the Gulf. At a later stage he urged that the situation in Persia should be internationalized, and that Germany should be induced by commercial concessions to share our interest in the maintenance of Persian independence. At one moment he toyed cautiously with the suggestion that Great Britain should enter into a form of alliance with Persia and should offer that country some stable guarantees. But in the end he came to the conclusion that the solution of the Central Asian problem lay in St. Petersburg; that if Great Britain desired to avoid a war with Russia on the Middle Eastern plateaux she must, at any sacrifice, come to some comprehensive understanding with her rival; and that any such convention must embrace Anglo-Russian interests not in Central Asia only, but also in Europe and the Far East.<sup>1</sup>

As a result of these and many other considerations the agreement of 1907 was concluded. The part regarding Persia runs:

Desiring to avoid any cause of conflict between their respective interests in certain regions of Persia, on the one hand, contiguous with or in the neighbourhood of the Russian frontier, and on the other, of the frontier of Baluchistan and Afghanistan, the Governments of Great Britain and of Russia have signed a friendly Arrangement on the subject.

The two Governments mutually agree to the strict independence and integrity of Persia by that Agreement, and testify that they sincerely desire not only the permanent establishment of equal advantages for the industry and commerce of all other nations, but also the pacific development of that country. Further, each of the two States binds itself to seek no concession of any kind whatsoever in these regions which are conterminous with or in the neighbourhood of the frontier of the other.

In the Arrangement the above-mentioned regions are clearly

<sup>1</sup> Harold Nicolson: *Lord Carnock*, pp. 59-60.

defined in order that, in the future, misunderstandings may be avoided, and in order to avoid creating a state of things which might, in any respect whatever, place the Persian Government in an embarrassing situation. The Russian and British Governments recognize, in mentioning the revenues affected to the loans concluded with the Discount and Loan Bank, and with the Imperial Bank, by the Persian Government, that, in the future, these loans will be affected to the same purpose as in the past; and in the case of irregularities in the amortization or in the payment of interest of the loan above mentioned, the two Governments engage equally in order by common agreement to determine the measures of control which it would be necessary to take, to enter on a friendly exchange of views, and to avoid all interference which would not be in accordance with the principles laid down in that Arrangement.

The two States have, in signing the Arrangement, steadfastly kept the fundamental principle in view that the independence and integrity of Persia should be respected absolutely. The sole object of the Arrangement is the avoidance of any cause of misunderstanding on the ground of Persian affairs between the contracting Parties. The Shah's Government will be convinced that the Agreement concluded between Russia and Great Britain cannot fail to promote the prosperity, security, and ulterior development of Persia in the most efficacious manner.

The two spheres were defined as follows:

Starting from Kasr-i-Shirin, the Russian line crosses and includes Isfahan, Yezd, and Kakh, ending at that point on the Persian frontier where the Russian and Afghan frontiers intersect. Going from the Afghan frontier via Gazik, Birjand, Kerman, the British line ends at Bandar Abbas.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the wording of the agreement, the Shah was not at all convinced that it would 'promote the prosperity and security of Persia in the most efficacious manner'. He saw that his last remaining weapon—the ability to play off the two rival Powers against one another—lay useless upon the ground. The Persian nation, which had still hoped for the support of England, felt itself to have been cheated. To the ever-present mistrust of Russia was now added mistrust of England. The fact that the agreement was concluded over the head of the Persian Government without the least reference to Teheran was a serious blow to Persian pride.

The Russians whose real aim was directed at the Persian Gulf

<sup>1</sup> Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907.



were not altogether satisfied, but they lost no time in extending and securing their sphere of influence. England may really have had the intention of respecting Persian integrity. Russia certainly had no such intention. The agreement was looked upon as a treaty of partition and the Russians secured their share. Opinion in London was divided. Lord Kitchener, at that time Commander-in-Chief in India, reckoned Persia as unimportant. He believed that an extension of Russian and German influence in the Persian Gulf could only be beneficial; and if the worst should come to the worst a German or Russian harbour in the Persian Gulf could easily be attacked by British naval forces. It is therefore due to his moderation that England's sphere of influence was confined to a very small zone in the south. British military authorities in India at the time were of opinion that such a sphere of influence must be capable of being defended from India in case of war. Lord Curzon, on the other hand, who had concentrated his energies upon keeping Russia in check since the days when he was Viceroy of India, attacked the treaty most bitterly in the Upper House. Nothing had been achieved in Afghanistan, he said, the convention regarding Tibet was tantamount to capitulation, and in Persia over a century's efforts in diplomacy and commerce had been thrown away. The Baghdad trade route had been ceded to Russia and the British position in the Persian Gulf was not secured.

Friction between Russia and England over Persia did not cease with the treaty. True it was thenceforward taken out of the clever hands of the Persian diplomatists and transferred to the Foreign Offices and Embassies of London and St. Petersburg. But as the years went on it increased rather than otherwise. The real state of feeling between the two officially friendly Powers is shown in a lecture given by Lieutenant-Colonel A. C. Yate at the Central Asian Society a few months before the outbreak of the World War.

There is not the smallest indication that the Czar's Government, from the moment that the Convention of 1907 was signed, ever had any other design than that of absorbing Azerbaijan. . . .

The neutral sphere has become a farce. It has long been so. When we sent troops to Shiraz and Ispahan, and projected railways from Khormusa to Khoramabad and Bandar Abbas to Shiraz; when we called to mind our long-standing interest in the

Karun valley route; when our Foreign Office put its foot down and told Turkey and Germany that the Baghdad Railway east of Basra was a matter that must be left to Great Britain; and, in short, when our responsible statesmen took steps to retain the Persian Gulf under British control, and felt so secure of their position there that they decided to invest over two millions in the Anglo-Persian oil wells, the farce became self-evident.

These words do not in any sense represent an indictment of British imperialism, but are in fact the preliminary to a recommendation that Persia should be divided up: '... the time has indeed come when we must picture to ourselves *an independent Persia* shorn of the provinces of Azerbaijan, Gilan, Mazanderan and Northern Khorasan. The *raison d'être* of Teheran as a capital has gone.'<sup>1</sup>

The phrases contain not only distrust of Russia but also an indication of what England regarded as the second danger in the Near East—the question of the Baghdad Railway. By its means Germany was on the point of achieving what the Russians were with so much trouble prevented from gaining, namely access to the Persian Gulf by the land route. This takes us back to Turkey for a moment. Among the concessions made to foreign companies as a result of the Ottoman money troubles were permits for the building of railways. At first these were purely commercial undertakings. This is proved by the fact that the railway from Haidar Pasha to Ismid, built in 1871 by the German engineer von Pressel, was afterwards transferred to English hands. But towards the end of the century the various Governments began to take an interest in the direction of the railway lines. The Deutsche Bank bought up Pressel's railway and obtained permission to carry it on as far as Baghdad. This was not, however, the only railway concession in the Turkish empire. The English had their lines in the Mediterranean region inland from Smyrna. The French wished to build Syria's railways. And while until the beginning of the twentieth century French and German interests ran peacefully side by side and at times were even capable of concurrent operation everything was changed by the Anglo-French agreement of 1903. The English and French now worked together in order to counteract Germany's

<sup>1</sup> Journal of the Central Asian Society, 1914, Vol. I, Part III, p. 47.

'eastward drive' (*Drang nach Osten*). The French refused to allow a branch line of the Baghdad Railway to be built to Alexandretta, for they looked upon this as their private Syrian domain. The English would not permit Koweit, at the head of the Persian Gulf, to become the terminus of the line. Compromises were made, and the building of the railway, parts of which were already doing good business, was interrupted by the outbreak of the War, as was that of the Turkish Hejaz Railway from Damascus to Medina and Mecca.

Such were the railways of the Powers who made the Near East one of the most eventful arenas during the World War. The Russians ran the railway from the north to Persian Azerbaijan, which was completed as far as Tabriz by 1916; they also had a trans-Persian project that filled the English with dismay. The English line advanced towards their lately won sphere of influence in Persian Seistan through the newly acquired province of Baluchistan, and was extended into Persian territory during the War. Further, they had plans for south Persian lines, and for a cross-country connection between Baghdad and Teheran. The French owned a network of railways in Syria, connecting Aleppo, Hama, and Homs in the north with Tripoli, Beirut, Damascus, Haifa and Jerusalem. The Germans had the Baghdad Railway, of which the enormous stretch from Haidar Pasha across Asia Minor as far as the gates of Cilicia was completed, as well as sections of line between Adana and Alexandretta and in Mesopotamia.

The Powers felt themselves to be lords in a great semi-colonial territory, and did not yet guess that the mutual rivalry which was leading them into war would also force them to sue for support among the native populations, whether they were Armenians or Assyrians, desert Arabs or Mesopotamian Shiites, Persian Bactrian tribes or chiefs in Luristan. Courted and esteemed as allies during the War, second-class nations once more acquired equality of rights, even though they might not be equally powerful. And this development was the introduction to a new era, the course of which is still only faintly discernible.

## THE WORLD WAR AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

In Europe the course of the War was determined from the outset. There was only one great question—who would win. The fronts were clearly defined. The General Staffs on either side had for years been elaborating plans for this war and arms factories had been producing munitions. The war in Asia, on the other hand, was an improvisation. Everything was in a continual state of flux. Until the end of the War each party was trying to bring the allies of the other over to its own side. In technical matters they relied upon home-made hand grenades and explosives, which individual horsemen quite calmly carried in their pockets together with matches and tinder. Hence the men making war in these parts were not cogs in a huge and complicated machine, cogs with no life of their own, pushed hither and thither according to the requirements of vast schemes. They were individuals whose individualities developed in the continual demand for initiative and inventiveness and the gift of leadership, as also in the legends which grew up about them, which spread in the manner of rumours in the East and which threw immense and distorted shadow-pictures of each one across whole stretches of country. Any and every account, therefore, of those campaigns in Asia is stimulating and exciting; and this war, which was fought amid religious and nationalist battle-cries, was as it were a last remnant of the Middle Ages, as alluring as the wars of chivalry, not to be compared with the scientific and inhuman precision of the methods and machinery of war in Europe.

Three types of action went on concurrently during the War in Asia, sometimes running parallel, sometimes overlapping, mutually helping and hindering one another. These were the regular military campaigns; guerrilla warfare; and diplomacy. Since the regular forces on either side were considered insufficient, both parties competed for the goodwill of the natives. Religious or nationalist slogans were used as suited the immediate purpose. The Mesopotamian Shiites, the fanatical Moslems of Kerbela and Najaf, regarded the Germans, if not actually as liberators, at least as a counterpoise to the hated Sunnite Turkish domination. The Sunnite Arabs of the Hejaz and a tiny fraction

of the Sunnites of Syria looked to the English to save them from the Turkish yoke. As Shiites, the Persians, it is true, disliked the Turks who, though powerless against Europe, seized every opportunity up to the outbreak of war to make slight 'rectifications' of frontiers. As a nation, however, the Persians had for years been seething with indignation at the greed of the Russians and the perfidy of the English. They had come to know the Germans not as imperialists but as friends. At the same time all combatants and neutrals as well as the waverers were desirous of being on the winning side at the end of the War. This occasioned sudden and unexpected changes of front according to the situation and the prospects of victory. Ideals lost their firmness of outline and were temporarily or permanently thrust into the background.

There were in the Near East four separate theatres of war.

First there was the struggle for the Dardanelles. This was a European affair and involved the question whether the European Power Russia might advance unhindered from the Black Sea; and also whether the European Powers in the Mediterranean might freely enter the Black Sea. The struggle for the Dardanelles, therefore, concerned the Near East only in so far as at the beginning of the War it kept a great number of Allied forces occupied until the futility of the continually renewed assault was realized.

Second there was the struggle for the Caucasus, Georgia, Armenia, and northern Persia. This was a war between Turks and Russians, carried on with varying fortunes, and in which the English sought to intervene only after the breakdown of the Russian forces.

Third there was the struggle for the Suez Canal and the upper end of the Red Sea, which later resolved itself into a struggle for Syria. Here the English fought against Turks and Germans.

Finally, there was the war in Mesopotamia, and southern and western Persia. The English invaded Mesopotamia, going north from the Persian Gulf, though only after having sustained a serious defeat at Kut in 1916, while the Turks advanced westwards along the old route through Kermanshah towards Hama-dan.

The efforts of the Allies were directed towards establishing

communications between the various seats of war, that is to say between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, between Egypt and Syria and Mesopotamia, and between Mesopotamia, north Persia, and Armenia. The aim of the Central Powers was to prevent any such connection, at the same time to keep as many as possible of the Allied forces in Asia, and to destroy the British sources of supply, especially the oil pipe-lines and the refinery of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company between Ahwaz and Abadan.

Guerrilla warfare was fostered in order to take pressure off the various fronts; on the Syrian-Suez Canal front by Lawrence and his friends, in Mesopotamia by Leachman on the English side and Lührs and Klein with a group of companions on the German; in Persia by Wassmuss, Seiler, Schünemann, Niedermayer and a number of others on the German side, and Sir Percy Sykes with a band of regular officers on the British side; in north-west Persia towards the end of the War by Dunsterville; in north-east Persia by Malleison; in the Caspian Sea by Captain Norris.

The fighters and their biographers on both sides have been generous in their recognition of their erstwhile opponents; but there have also been recriminations on both sides that unnecessarily spoil the picture of this improvised guerrilla and chivalrous warfare. Each side accuses the other of having bought and bribed its followers. Such nonsense! Of course money was spent on both sides. The methods of spending money are different in the East and in the West. In Europe a soldier gets his pay; in Asia the sheikh of a tribe is given a present of money and in return he furnishes a given number of fighting men. The English certainly spent more money than the Germans. That, however, is not to be regarded as a sign of greater moral turpitude but is due to the hazard of circumstance. The English had more money and were always able to obtain fresh supplies, while the various groups of Germans were completely cut off from communication with their own people. Wassmuss is accused of having pretended to be a Mahometan among the Persian tribes. But did not Lawrence before leaving Cairo also practise the movements of the Moslem rites of prayer? It is asserted that the Kaiser sent misleading messages to obscure tribal chiefs. Possibly. But Lord Kitchener, whose reputation in the East was

probably greater than that of his king, also sent his salaams to the then obscure Shereef of Mecca. The English accuse the Germans and the Germans accuse the English of having brought into life the nationalist movement not from honest conviction but only in the service of their own countries. Undoubtedly the British fought for Great Britain and the Germans for Germany. That was what the war was about. But neither Wassmuss nor Lawrence would have been so successful if their zeal for the nationalist cause of Persia and Arabia had not been genuine. Both of them showed after the War how seriously they took it. Prices were set on the heads of the chief opponents in each case. That is no longer customary in Europe. But in Asia a medieval form of guerrilla warfare was in progress. And as long as war exists each side will try by every means available in the circumstances to win. That is the nature of war.

Some of the mutual accusations and recriminations are founded upon misunderstanding. For that very reason it is a great pity to allow them to persist. Great indignation has been caused in Germany by the fact that German officers and leaders are called 'agents' in English books. The word 'agent' in German has unpleasant associations; it suggests *agents provocateurs* and spies. This implication is lacking in the English term. Lord Cromer, perhaps the most famous of empire builders, was Agent in Egypt. The highest English political official in Bahrein, the real ruler of this island State, is decried as Political Agent. Sir Robert Hodgson, the present English Minister in Nationalist Spain, was officially known as Diplomatic Agent until recognition was accorded to Franco. Thus in English the term 'agent' is not an insult but merely a professional designation. On the other hand the English think it abominable of the Germans not to admit Sir Percy Sykes's South Persia Rifles as a regular military unit, that is to say a legitimate representative of order in the country, but to put them on a level with their own little bands. Such bickering is, it seems to us, unworthy of both sides.

Who was the first to make plans 'with evil intent' for a campaign in Asia before the War? We believe no one did so. Otherwise the whole affair could never have been so amateurishly conducted. The very names of the various Germans who took part in the Persian venture prove it. The plans were only half

made. Suitable and unsuitable were mingled, and not until they came to Aleppo were the unsuitable ones weeded out. On the other side the organization of the Arab revolt was so strongly dependent upon individual inspiration, it was so greatly obstructed by British military authorities that it only began to develop properly in 1916. The affair was not conducted by professional soldiers. Lawrence was an archaeologist, so was Lührs. Schünemann began his career in Persia as a teacher of handicrafts in an Armenian orphanage. Seiler's line was natural science, Niedermayer's geology—all very useful, of course. Sykes was Consul in Meshed. He helped to fix the boundary between Persia and Baluchistan, and knew the district better than almost any one else. Hentig was attaché to the Legation in Teheran. True, Hentig was also an officer in the Reserve; and after a terrific march through the desert that lasted for months and was carried through in the face of lack of water, food, and means of transport, he extracted a dazzling white cuirassier uniform from some obscure corner of his baggage before his entry into Herat, with a sure instinct for the lasting impression that would be made on the imagination of the Oriental by the brilliant uniform and the force of his personality.

The non-military aspect of many of the undertakings showed itself at intervals in clashes with professional soldiers. It was less noticeable among the Germans, because they were either in close spatial connection and co-operation with their army, or else at such a distance that there was no chance of friction. But there is no doubt that the progress of German designs in Persia was very greatly hampered by the repeated incursions of the Turks. The Turks did not come as liberators but as victors and they behaved accordingly.

Among the English the attitude of suspicion between professionals and amateurs was mutual. Lawrence said of the two generals Murray and Bell to whom he was subordinate:

Murray and Belinda had begun so tiresomely that our thought those first days had been, not to defeat the enemy, but to make our own chiefs let us live. Only by time and performance had we converted Sir Archibald and his Chief of Staff, who in their last months, wrote to the War Office commending the Arab venture, and especially Feisal in it. This was generous of them and our secret triumph,



for they were an odd pair in one chariot—Murray all brains and claws, nervous, elastic, changeable; Lynden Bell so solidly built up of layers of professional opinion, glued together after Government testing and approval, and later trimmed and polished to standard pitch.<sup>1</sup>

Lawrence had little sympathy with the procedure of the British regular army in Mesopotamia. Before his campaigns with Feisal he was sent to find out what the feeling of the people was. His report runs:

Before this we had had hopes of Mesopotamia. The beginning of the Arab Independence Movement had been there, under the vigorous and unscrupulous impulse of Seyid Taleb, and later of Yasin el Hashimi and the military league. Aziz el Masri, Enver's rival, who was living, much indebted to us, in Egypt, was an idol of the Arab officers. He was approached by Lord Kitchener in the first days of the war, with the hope of winning the Turkish Mesopotamian forces to our side. Unfortunately Britain was bursting then with confidence in an easy and early victory: the smashing of Turkey was called a promenade. So the Indian Government was adverse to any pledges to the Arab nationalists which might limit their ambitions to make the intended Mesopotamian colony play the self-sacrificing role of a Burma for the general good. It broke off negotiations, rejected Aziz, and interned Sayid Taleb, who had placed himself in our hands.

By brute force it marched then into Basra. The enemy troops in Iraq were nearly all Arabs in the unenviable predicament of having to fight on behalf of their secular oppressors against a people long envisaged as liberators, but who obstinately refused to play the part. As may be imagined, they fought very badly. Our forces won battle after battle till we came to think an Indian army better than a Turkish army. There followed our rash advance to Ctesiphon, where we met native Turkish troops whose full heart was in the game, and were abruptly checked. We fell back, dazed; and the long misery of Kut began. . . .

The conditions were ideal for an Arab movement. . . . Had we published the promises made to the Sherif, or even the proclamation afterwards posted in captured Baghdad, and followed it up, enough local fighting men would have joined us to harry the Turkish line of communication between Baghdad and Kut. . . .

However, as this was not the way of the directing parties there, I returned at once to Egypt; and till the end of the war the British in Mesopotamia remained substantially an alien force invading

<sup>1</sup> T. E. Lawrence: *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, p. 320.

enemy territory, with the local people passively neutral or sullenly against them, and in consequence had not the freedom of movement and elasticity of Allenby in Syria, who entered the country as a friend, with the local people actively on his side. The factors of numbers, climate and communications favoured us in Mesopotamia more than in Syria; and our higher command was, after the beginning, no less efficient and experienced. But their casualty lists compared with Allenby's, their wood-chopping tactics compared with his rapier-play, showed how formidably an adverse political situation was able to cramp a purely military operation.<sup>1</sup>

Up to the last moment Lawrence worked hard to prevent the occupation of Damascus from appearing as a victorious entry by the Allies; instead he made it into a festival of national liberation so that there was nothing to check the spontaneous enthusiasm of the population. This probably more than anything else drew upon him the lasting and almost vindictive hostility of the French.

This comparison of the tactics pursued in Syria and Mesopotamia is interesting not only on account of the War but also because of what has come out of it.

'Conquered' Mesopotamia has become the free and independent State of Iraq. Syria, which revolted of its own free will and was 'liberated', has become the rebellious mandated States of Palestine and Syria. It is a tempting idea to go into the question whether there is any connection between the two facts.

The protagonists in the liberation movements are spread all over Near Eastern lands from the Red Sea to Afghanistan—for even there an attempt was made by the Germans to rouse the people to attack England's most treasured possession, India. The campaigns were like a series of real schoolboy adventure tales, though under conditions which not even a Fennimore Cooper could have imagined. Long marches with the thermometer at one hundred and thirty degrees across the burning salt desert, with sick men and pack animals, and sullen subordinates. Mountaineering with the continual danger of being surprised by the enemy. Complete severance of communications with their own people. The need of conforming to strange customs,

<sup>1</sup> T. E. Lawrence: *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, p. 59.

of wearing strange clothes, of arousing enthusiasm in people with a completely different mentality. The absolute necessity of never for a moment allowing courage to flag, not in sickness, nor in the greatest isolation, nor after a defeat, lest adherents should fall away like dry earth from polished metal. Adherents were so difficult to handle. Many, to be perfectly frank, were quite simply robbers. They came into the War hoping for booty. Others attempted to settle their private tribal and family feuds in this greater war. Others were honestly filled with zeal. Others were turncoats and were prepared not merely to drift away but to go over to the enemy with all their 'military' information.

They were scattered about all over Kerman and Shiraz, in the mountains of Kazerun, in Ispahan, at times in Kermanshah. Schünemann marched through the wildest and most ill-famed parts of Luristan with a little band of faithful followers, knowing that he could not make his way out either in front or behind. Seiler established himself in the south-east with his wireless set until the Persia Rifles arrived. Wassmuss gave his name to a whole district, the stretch of country between Bushire and the northern end of the Gulf, and until the end of the War prevented the British troops in Shiraz from linking up with those of Bushire. All of them threw themselves heart and soul into the cause. Hence they are all agreed in having practically nothing but praise for their native troops and followers. The sum of physical trials may be read in their reports, but little of the continual terrible mental strain. To show the psychological difficulties it is therefore necessary to give some account of native military tactics.

At the time when the Arab Committee still regarded its functions as purely political and at most made visits to Arabia from Cairo for the purpose of negotiations, the military organization and leadership of the Arabs was still in the hands of naval and military officers. Lieutenant Colonel Vickery was appointed with eight hundred Arab warriors and Emir Feisal's troop to take from the Turks the town of Weidj on the Red Sea. Emir Feisal had five days to reach his objective. Meanwhile a British battleship was approaching, and Vickery had to bring up his eight hundred men. The appointed day came, the battleship came, Lieutenant Colonel Vickery and his eight hundred were

on the spot. There was no sign of the Emir. Vickery and his men landed.

One Arab [says Vickery] had attracted my notice—one Saleh, and he was asked to act as chief of staff. He replied that he could only answer for his own men—thirty in all.

On trying to form up the remainder, three hundred at once sat down on the beach, saying they were tired, and they had come ashore for a little rest and a sleep. They started to light fires, and were obviously not going to fight. I turned to the remainder, two hundred of whom at once announced that they were not fighting men; they had come to loot. Off they went along the seashore, saying that they would wait outside the town till I had captured it, an operation they hoped that I should execute with great promptitude, as they were in a hurry. The remainder condescended to follow us at the moment when the first gun of the S.N.O.'s flagship opened on the town. A seaplane which went up was received with a brisk fire by the Turkish garrison, and the observer was unfortunately killed. Shortly afterwards we ran into a Turkish patrol. We were lucky enough to shoot first, and dropped three of them, but it was enough for some 250 of the Arabs.

The force had now dwindled down to Saleh and his 30 men; after a few hundred yards more they gave it up and lay down. There we remained throughout the day, a mile from the town, sniped at by the Turks, while I prefer to forget some of the signals of the Navy encouraging us to go on.

A plan had been made that a detachment of sailors would land to assist us if we were in difficulties. The party landed, and, after passing a very cheerless night, the town was captured with their assistance next morning. The looting-party at once got to work, and certain articles of female attire captured in the Turkish commandant's house appeared to cause great disgust to these delicate-minded and sensitive Arabs.

From the few Syrian prisoners who had remained to give themselves up we learnt that they had had full intelligence of all the Emir's plans, and that the commandant had left two days ago, leaving only a small rearguard, which was the force that we had encountered the previous day.

There was no sign of the Emir, so we all re-embarked, leaving the Arabs to the thoroughly congenial task of looting the city.<sup>1</sup>

This was not the opinion of the army. It was evident that a man like Lieutenant Colonel Vickery was not only incapable of

<sup>1</sup> Journal of the Central Asian Society, 1923, Part I, p. 57.

working with the Arabs, but had failed with his 'superior' and sarcastic manner to kindle the least spark of enthusiasm among the Bedouin. Lawrence's account of his first visit to Feisal—at a time when most of his experience still lay before him—may serve as an example of the powers of intuition shown by archaeologists, scientists, and diplomatists as leaders in guerrilla warfare. On the morning after his first interview with the same Feisal at whose non-appearance Vickery had been so indignant, he wandered round the camp and talked to the men trying to ascertain their number and their place of origin, and to find out their state of mind. The opinion he formed was:

The actual contingents were continually shifting, in obedience to the rule of flesh. A family would own a rifle, and the sons serve in turn for a few days each. Married men alternated between camp and wife, and sometimes a whole clan would become bored and take a rest. Consequently the paid men were more than those mobilized; and policy often gave to great sheikhs, as wages, money that was a polite bribe for friendly countenance. Feisal's eight thousand men were one in ten camel-corps and the rest hill-men. They served only under their tribal sheikhs, and near home, arranging their own food and transport. Nominally each sheikh had a hundred followers. . . .

Blood feuds were nominally healed, and really suspended in the Sherifian area: Billi and Juheina, Ateiba and Ageyl living and fighting side by side in Feisal's army. All the same, the members of one tribe were shy of those of another, and within the tribe no man would quite trust his neighbour. Each might be, usually was, whole-hearted against the Turk, but perhaps not quite to the point of failing to work off a family grudge upon a family enemy in the field. Consequently they could not attack. One company of Turks firmly entrenched in open country could have defied the entire army of them; and a pitched defeat, with its casualties, would have ended the war by sheer horror.

I concluded that the tribesmen were good for defence only. Their acquisitive recklessness made them keen on booty, and whetted them to tear up railways, plunder caravans, and steal camels; but they were too free-minded to endure command, or to fight in team. A man who could fight well by himself made generally a bad soldier, and these champions seemed to me no material for our drilling.<sup>1</sup>

A comparison of Vickery's and Lawrence's accounts shows

<sup>1</sup> T. E. Lawrence: *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, p. 103.

that both actually ascertained the same facts. Only their conclusions are different. The soldier despised the Arabs as a cowardly, greedy rabble. The archaeologist had the imagination and the insight to realize the source of their peculiarities, and from that realization to decide how these men might usefully be employed—in small nocturnal surprises, in harassing rearguards, in interrupting lines of communication, in attacking food transports, in short in guerrilla warfare.

It is difficult to turn from the hazards, thrills, and adventures of these campaigns back to politics. Nevertheless the two are very closely connected. The Bedouin and the hill tribes would not have entered the War but for the promises made to them. We need not concern ourselves with the promises made by the Central Powers, for the defeat of the Central Powers prevented their ever being carried out. They are important only in their general trend, a trend which runs parallel with that of the Allies, though perhaps quite unconsciously—to awaken a feeling of self-reliance, of self-confidence in peoples who had long been treated as 'semi-colonials'.

The promises of the Allies were made as necessity arose. First Italy must be brought into the War; hence the plan to divide Asia Minor into spheres of influence. An end must finally be made to the 'Sick Man' on the Bosphorus, who had, according to Lloyd George, so faithlessly 'sold' himself to the Germans. All were agreed on that point. Then the campaign against the Turks and Germans proved to be much more arduous than had been anticipated. So the Arabs were mobilized. The promise made in their case was to found a free Arab State. No agreement was made as to the frontiers of such a State, for archaeologists are not, after all, diplomatists or experts on international law. And the Arabs themselves were accustomed to have vast empty stretches of desert between one country and another, so that frontiers were not of paramount importance. But the French have a hatred of any vagueness. They wanted to see in black and white what the final result would look like. So Picot, a French general, and Sir Mark Sykes—not to be confused with Sir Percy Sykes of Persian fame—got together and made an agreement in 1916. It is known as the Sykes-Picot Agreement, and was con-

firmed by the Foreign Secretary, Lord Grey, and M. Cambon, the French Ambassador to London. It partitions Syria and Mesopotamia between England and France. A part of Syria—Palestine—was reserved independently of this as a Jewish National Home in the London negotiations with the Zionists.

How was this possible since Mark Sykes was expressly mentioned by Lawrence as one of a small group—among whom Ronald Storrs was accounted a leading personality—working in Cairo for an Arab revolt? Perhaps the answer is to be found in Sykes's character. Storrs says of him that he might equally well have been an actor or a caricaturist or a parliamentary speaker and diplomatist—an interesting compound. Lawrence describes him in these words:

Then there was the imaginative advocate of unconvincing world-movements, Mark Sykes: also a bundle of prejudices, intuitions, half-sciences. His ideas were of the outside; and he lacked patience to test his materials before choosing his style of building. He would take an aspect of the truth, detach it from its circumstances, inflate it, twist and model it, until its old likeness and its new unlikeness together drew a laugh; and laughs were his triumphs. His instincts lay in parody: by choice he was a caricaturist rather than an artist, even in statesmanship. He saw the odd in everything, and missed the even. He would sketch out in a few dashes a new world, all out of scale, but vivid as a vision of some sides of the thing we hoped. His help did us good and harm. For this his last week in Paris tried to atone. He had returned from a period of political duty in Syria, after his awful realization of the true shape of his dreams, to say gallantly: 'I was wrong: here is the truth.' His former friends would not see his new earnestness, and thought him fickle and in error; and very soon he died. It was a tragedy of tragedies, for the Arab's sake.<sup>1</sup>

It was a tragedy from the results of which the people of Palestine and Syria are still suffering, although it would perhaps be a mistake to suppose that the French would have allowed themselves to be prevented from occupying Syria, even had there been no Sykes-Picot Agreement to allot it to them by treaty.

Further promises made to keep various allies up to the mark were never carried out any more than were those of the Central

<sup>1</sup> T.E. Lawrence: *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, p. 58.

Powers. The Dardanelles and the neutral zone of Persia were promised to the Russians; the coast of Asia Minor to the Greeks; additional tracts of land to the Italians. But the armistice in the autumn of 1918, for which the Turks sued a few weeks earlier than the Germans, did not bring the war in Asia to an end. In Persia fighting went on between Persian and Communist bands. In Mesopotamia, the natives waited until this moment to rise, and they rose against the English who had been supposed to liberate them. In Syria French troops occupied Damascus, the city which Feisal had entered with tears in his eyes. In Asia Minor weary Turkish farmers and soldiers and peasant women made a last rally under one of their officers, Mustafa Kemal, in order to resist the Allied peace provisions.

Thus the end of the War, which came here at different times in different districts, brought only part of the result that the victorious Allies had planned at the conference in Paris. Their intentions went wholly by the board in Asia Minor. The 'Sick Man' became a poor but sound and purely Turkish man in Angora. Rheza Khan, a Persian Cossack officer, rose in Persia in protest against Curzon's 'Treaty of Friendship' that was more like a Protectorate. In Arabia, thanks to his own vigour, thanks also to English subsidies, an almost unknown prince stood at the beginning of a splendid career—Abdul Aziz ibn Saud, chief of the Wahabites. Mesopotamia and Syria were in actual fact partitioned between England and France. In Mesopotamia the mandated State of Iraq arose; northern Syria was put under French mandate; Palestine as a Jewish National Home in an Arab State under British mandate. And the only corner that remained of the Arabic State that had been promised to the Shereefian family of Mecca—the infertile land of Transjordan—was separated from Palestine and handed over to Feisal's brother, the Emir Abdullah; this too under British mandate.

Thus a homogeneous world that had held together since the sixteenth century was dismembered, and the separate parts were faced with the necessity of finding out how to settle their own internal affairs and how to adjust their relations with their neighbours and with the European Great Powers.



## IV

### THE SCENES OF POST-WAR IMPERIALISM

*'... The Persian Gulf, the control of which is almost equivalent to the domination of the Middle East.'*

[SYKES, *History of Persia*, Vol. II, p. 431]

*'On more than one occasion during the summer (1877) he (Lord Beaconsfield) was considering the seizure of Batum by a British army and a march upon Tiflis.'*

[SETON WATSON, *Britain in Europe*, p. 527]

*'A drop of petroleum is worth a drop of blood.'*

[CLEMENCEAU]

STRATEGIC points have always been the same, no matter whether men fought with slings and battle-axes, with swords and lances, or with machine-guns and hand grenades. This is just as true for Asia Minor as for the rest of the world. In the Near East, indeed, it may be proved further back than in most places. In Byblos, the Syrian town on the Mediterranean, a Crusaders' castle stands upon the walls of a Phoenician fortress. A struggle was already going on for the gates of Cilicia when the Burgundian gate between Gallia and Germania had never been heard of.

It is due to the abundance of mountains that access to Asiatic countries is infrequent and difficult. The few great arterial roads have always remained the same, though sometimes the important direction has been north and south and sometimes east and west, according to the balance of power at the time.

There are two so-called land routes from Europe to Central Asia and the Near East. One runs from the Balkans through Constantinople and the Straits to Asia Minor. The other runs from southern Russia across the narrow strip of land between the Black Sea and the Caspian to north Persia and Asia Minor. Since the territory on each side of the Bosphorus has been in the same hand, the Balkan route has been closed or at least only open with the concurrence of the Power ruling in Constanti-

nople. For the present there is none to dispute this bridge between East and West. That does not mean that there never will be again. On the other hand the mountainous bridge of the Caucasus between Russia and Azerbaijan was contested not only in the days of the Romans and Parthians and at the time of the Turko-Persian wars, but has remained a cause of friction down to the most modern days, a cause of war between three Great Powers and many races. To-day it is the sally-port for the Soviets just as before the War it was for Tsarist Russia. Peter the Great's Will still applies, however greatly the articles of faith of his people may have changed.

The Cilician gates in the Taurus, and the Syrian gates in the Amanus mountains behind Alexandretta nearly always go together. Whoever owns the one also aims at having the other. The narrow rocky gorge in the Taurus through which runs a clear mountain stream was, until blasting operations were undertaken in the nineteenth century, so narrow that it was necessary to unload camels before they could pass through and to carry baggage and bales and goods through by hand. Nevertheless this narrow gorge has always been one of the roads most frequently used for military purposes by conquerors. The modern traveller after having passed through the ravine will find two small military cemeteries, one German and the other Turkish, testimony to the last battle for the gateway through which Alexander and Darius passed. These German and Turkish soldiers were the last actually to fight by force of arms in Cilicia, but the diplomatic contest over the Syrian gates continued after the end of the World War. In the last round, in the struggle for the Sanjak of Alexandretta, Turkey emerged victorious. In September 1938 the Sanjak became a small autonomous republic—'the Hatay', in memory of the kings of Hatti who occupied Syria as the first rulers of Asia Minor. This little republic not only possesses the port of Alexandretta as its capital, the obvious harbour for northern Syria, south-eastern Asia Minor, and Mesopotamia, but by owning the Syrian gates it also controls the approach from the north-east in case of an invasion of Syria.

For those who are dependent upon the sea route and who do not come through the Mediterranean, the way to Arabia,

Mesopotamia and Iran runs through the Persian Gulf. Its importance has varied with the centuries. At times it has been the scene of war between Arabs on the west coast and Persians on the east; at other times foreign Powers have fought for supremacy in its most important harbours. After the discovery of the sea route round the Cape of Good Hope and the barring of the Red Sea by the Turks its importance was temporarily lost. But it was this very sea route that opened the way for Europeans to a new Orient, to the Far East, to India and China. And with the struggle for India began the European struggle for the Persian Gulf. With the victory of England in India came the predominance of England in the Persian Gulf, which to-day is somewhat diminished, but by no means broken.

A wholly new field of imperialism is oil. This was not discovered until the turn of the century. It has led to a network of pipe-lines running across whole continents, to the establishment of refineries that seem like the fortresses of the future. The pipe-lines cannot be compared with the railroad concessions of other days. They represent a far less peaceful mode of penetration than the latter. Undoubtedly the railways were also 'protected', and the officials were foreigners—those who were German were called 'Fertigji' on account of the brisk 'Fertig!' (Ready!) with which they started the trains. But railways were there to be used by everybody. Turks and Syrians and Mesopotamians might travel on them with all their picturesque, comfortable baggage, rolled up in gaily coloured old kelims or stowed in beautiful great baskets. On the other hand, oil runs through the pipe-lines for the Powers only—from Mosul to Tripoli for the French, to Haifa for the English, and not for Iraqis or Syrians; from Ahwaz to Abadan for the British Admiralty and not for Iran; from Bahrein to Sitra for the Americans and not for the Arabs. Any one who mixes with the people in Syria will be surprised to find how often the word 'Eyepissee'—I.P.C., Iraq Petroleum Company—occurs in the conversation of all sorts of people, whether they speak French or Arabic or English. It has become a State within a State, interwoven with, but apart from other States, with its own administration, its own air fleet, its own little army. It is not listed as a State in the domesday book of Nations, but it exists. It fits out exploratory expeditions into



## THE PERSIAN GULF

unknown territory. In the same way the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, another little State, has its own money—'chips'—and its own hospitals, cinemas, and tobacco shops.

In the following pages the most important of these strategic positions will be dealt with. We shall confine ourselves, however, to those that are in European or American hands, as remnants of nineteenth-century imperialism, or as new starting-points for the struggle for power in the twentieth century. For it is they which lead to world conflicts and which may be the decisive factor in world conflicts.

### THE PERSIAN GULF

The damp heat of the Persian Gulf, the narrow arm of sea lying between two burning hot countries is so great and in summer so unbearable that residence on its coasts and its islands is a misery to all who are not born there, to all who do not in time yield to its strange fascination. Hence foreign organizations here have usually been short-lived, like tropical plants that shoot up to a great height only to die off equally rapidly. And systems of foreign domination never have penetrated very deeply. A governor is appointed by the ruling Power to act jointly with the native prince, tributes are collected, and that is all. Darius included not only the coast-lands of Persia in his empire but also the island of Bahrein that lies off the shore of Arabia, and by making Bahrein a penal settlement he was perhaps the first ruler to institute the system of using islands to house convicts. Shahpur, the Parthian king, made successful expeditions against the Gulf Arabs, and indeed occupied land in southern Arabia that went beyond the environs of the Gulf. With the advent of the Moslems, however, everything was changed. They founded the city of Basra and from there spread through the Gulf lands. They converted the Arabs to Islam. The Gulf Arabs were incited to action and took up a new profession to which they remained faithful until well on into the twentieth century—that of piracy. They made night attacks upon the Persian coast and went inland on pillaging expeditions. They smuggled slaves. They smuggled arms. They seized merchant ships. Only a few years ago, so an engineer from the oil-

refinery in Abadan tells, the Arabs from 'over the other side' had news that a residential camp was to be shifted. One night when the camp happened to be unguarded—the owners had left but their belongings were still there—they paid a surprise visit and helped themselves to whatever took their fancy.

About the year 1050 a Turkish expedition went from Kerman across the Gulf of Oman to Muscat, which remained a tributary State for forty years. A hundred years later the Arab Idrissi announced that the ruler of Bahrein must deliver annually a definite proportion of the yield of the pearl fisheries to the Caliphs of Baghdad. Every now and then a new sect, desirous of conquest, would arise and make raids from the island into the neighbouring countries. An early sect of Ismaili who came from Bahrein and stole the sacred black stone from the Ka'aba at Mecca has already been mentioned.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century came the Portuguese. Albuquerque sailed along the coast of Arabia, plundered the ports, maimed men and women whom he took prisoner. Then, on the Persian side of the entrance to the Gulf, he besieged the flourishing town of Hormuz upon the arid little volcanic island of Yerun. The 'king' of the island was enjoined to pay tribute to the Portuguese as well as to the Persian Shah Ismael. He was freed of his dilemma by the departure of the Portuguese. Next time Albuquerque arrived with a regular fleet, murdered Rais Hamid of Hormuz, and occupied the town. A mighty fortress was erected with iron gates, double walls, barracks, and store-houses. The Portuguese colonized the strategic points on the Gulf—one fort was built on the opposite coast, in romantic Muscat, one in the main island of Bahrein—buildings that are objects of admiration to this day.

At the end of the sixteenth century, however, the English appeared. They had already created the East India Company, but they were not able to sell enough goods in the country of the Grand Mogul so they came upon the idea of introducing the remainder into Persia. They were well received by the Shah, who resented the high tariff which the Turks had put upon Persian silks and hoped now to be able to export his silk by way of the Gulf. The Portuguese received the English less cordially.

In 1620 a sea fight took place at Yesk in which the English were victorious.

The Persians, seeing two mutually antagonistic invaders of their country, felt that here was an opportunity not to be missed. They looked upon the Portuguese with their mighty fortifications as the more dangerous and suggested to the English that they should make common cause against Portugal. The English at first rejected the idea. Then it was indicated that they would lose their privileges and that the silks—for which they had already paid—would be confiscated.

The English were neither statesmen nor professional naval men. They were simply traders. They knew that there was peace between England and Portugal. They knew that the Company's directors in India would forbid any warlike demonstration for fear of a royal reprimand. Nevertheless they determined upon a private war against the Portuguese, for the building up of their Persian trade had cost much labour and money. Now the sailors struck. They had only been engaged for commercial undertakings, they said. But those were rough times. A few promises, a few threats, and the sailors professed themselves satisfied. So the little war at sea began. Hormuz was taken, and the Portuguese were obliged to withdraw to their magnificent fortress at Muscat.

Next came the Dutch. In 1623 they settled in the neighbourhood of Bender Abbas and gradually collected the whole of the silk trade into their own hands.

Not to let the foreigners have it all their own way the native-born Imam of Oman took the fortress of Muscat from the Portuguese in 1650. After that the Portuguese had very little more say in the Gulf.

Last of all came the French. They made a settlement in Bender Abbas and had the island of Kharak at the head of the Gulf made over to them without occupying it. While the Portuguese gradually disappeared from the Gulf—though to this day Indo-Portuguese are to be found in the ports—the Dutch occupied the island of Kishm, and the Imam of Oman conquered the Bahrein islands. In the middle of the century, under Nadir Shah, the Persians had one of their periodic spells of energy, bought a fleet of twenty ships and turned the

Persian sovereignty in the Gulf from a pretension to a reality.

After Nadir's death the Dutch took advantage of the Persian relapse into indolence and occupied Kharak. Within a few years the arid island was turned into a flourishing trading colony; only to relapse just as quickly into a barren waste after the famous pirate Mir Mohanna had recaptured it from the Dutch.

At the end of the eighteenth century the English established a trading station at Bushire, half-way up the Gulf. And thereafter Bushire remained their headquarters in the Gulf for one hundred and fifty years, and the seat of the British Gulf Resident. Almost at the same time the Persians took from the Turks Basra, the flourishing trading centre on the Shatt-el-Arab which had acquired the whole of the Indian trade. A few decades later it was quietly retaken by the Ottoman empire.

By the end of the eighteenth century the English alone remained. The Portuguese had gone long since. The Dutch, after their defeats in Europe, were obliged to retrench. The French who had spent longer time there than any one were turned out in 1809. This was due to the Anglo-Persian reaction to Napoleon's plans for India. The firman which the Shah issued to the English in 1763 on the subject of their privileges in Bushire shows the power which they had in the course of time built up:

1. The English Company may have as much ground, and in any part of Bushire as they choose, to build a factory on, or at any other port in the Gulf. They may have as many cannon mounted on it as they choose, but not to be larger than 6 pounds bore; and they may build factory-houses in any part of the kingdom they choose.

2. No Customs Dues to be Levied on Goods Imported or Exported at Bushire or elsewhere.

3. No other European nation to Import Woollen Goods.<sup>1</sup>

Then follow notes regarding the settlement of debts and the right of purchase, upon religious freedom, the surrender of deserters, the freedom from taxation of the Company's employees, and the prohibition of clandestine trading. And at the end comes a paragraph concerning the thing that an Oriental values more than any thing else—a garden. 'Wherever the Eng-

<sup>1</sup> Sykes: *History of Persia*, Vol. II, p. 281.



lish are, they shall have a spot of ground allotted them for a Burying Ground; and if they want a spot for a Garden, if the King's property, it shall be given them gratis; if belonging to any private person, they must pay a reasonable price for it.'

During the nineteenth century the English were occupied in securing their spheres of influence and extending them, and in preventing other Europeans from making their way into the Gulf. The extension proceeded on diplomatic and commercial lines. Agreements were concluded with various sheikhs along the coasts and on the islands. An armistice or agreement was made with the pirates. A small naval station was built on the island of Kishm where once the Dutch had been, and another on the neighbouring island of Henjam. The two commanded the entrance to the Gulf. Opposite, at Muscat, the British Consul simultaneously bore the title of Agent, which always implies political intervention in the affairs of a 'friendly' or 'protected' State. During the minor Anglo-Persian war over Afghanistan, the little island of Kharak opposite the estuary of the Shatt-el-Arab was also occupied, as well as the towns of Mohammerah and Ahwaz. The discovery of oil had not yet, however, been made, so after the end of the war these places were given up again. On the Shatt-el-Arab the position was considered to be sufficiently secured by the Agent in the Sultanate of Koweit and by the commercial settlement in Basra.

One of the largest concerns in Basra was the firm of Lynch Brothers. They acquired the concession to run a steamer on the Karun. The subsequent doubts of the Shah were resolved by the gift of a steamer that was worked on behalf of His Majesty by Mr. Lynch at some annual loss to the firm. Navigation of the Tigris and Euphrates was inaugurated. 'Mespers' (the Mesopotamia-Persia Steam Navigation Company) was founded, and became one of the most powerful institutions in the Gulf, with agents in every port. Two telegraph lines providing communication with India met at Bushire, an overland line and a cable through the Gulf.

The most difficult task was that of keeping other people out. This was no longer the seventeenth century, and the transformed East India Company, the head of which was now a Viceroy,

could not start a private war in the Gulf in peace time, much as some of the officials may have wished to do so when the first Russian and later the first German steamer took the liberty of sailing up the Gulf. Christopher Sykes, the son of that Mark Sykes who made the Sykes-Picot Agreement, says:

As every one knows, if it is desired to make the colour leave the face of an official of our Indian empire it is only necessary to say the word 'Russia' suddenly. Almost the same phenomenon can be brought to pass by an unexpected use of the word 'Afghanistan'.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately he does not say what effect a combination of the words 'Russia' or 'Germany' with 'Persian Gulf' would have. But at that time England's Viceroy in India was Lord Curzon. Lord Lansdowne, the Foreign Secretary, had stated in the Upper House: 'I say it without hesitation, we should regard the establishment of a naval base or of a fortified port in the Persian Gulf by any other power as a very grave menace to British interests, and we should certainly resist it with all the means at our disposal.'

After this exceedingly clear statement, Lord Curzon in 1903 made a tour of demonstration through the Persian Gulf accompanied by the Indian fleet which, according to Sir Percy Sykes, had a very favourable effect upon the political situation.

None the less the German firm of Wonckhaus that had begun trading in mother-of-pearl at Lingah had the temerity, as agent of the Hamburg-America line, to allow a German steamer to run up to Basra. Nothing is said as to how the complexion of the British reacted to this circumstance, but the Arabs who were invited on board were greatly impressed both by the ship's orchestra and by the banquet provided for them.

The German shipping line was not alone. A terminus for the Baghdad Railway was being sought on the Gulf. By a secret treaty with the English the Sheikh of Koweit could not give the Germans a concession for this. All other attempts to obtain a site failed. A German concession for the pearl fisheries in Bahrein? What next? Great Britain intervened at the Porte where the concession had been applied for; for in those days even less than now did any one know to whom Bahrein actually

<sup>1</sup> Christopher Sykes: *Wassmuss*, p. 42.

belonged. A German irrigation concession in the Karun valley, German harbour facilities in Mohammerah—everything was swiftly and silently scotched by the English. Only one thing was conceded in the negotiations of 1914—that Basra should be the terminus of the Baghdad Railway.

Britons in the Indian empire were furious over this. It just showed what was to be expected of a Liberal Government that had no idea of preserving imperial interests, was the cry. It was all the doing of Sir Edward Grey, who did not know the difference between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf! The possibility that one day the ships of the Hamburg-America line might be anchored opposite the cranes and trucks of the Baghdad Railway seemed to many as bad as the idea of a naval station or the fortification of the harbour that had been refused by Lord Lansdowne. Fortunately one of the most able of Englishmen was appointed to the Gulf—Sir Percy Cox, known throughout the Arabic world as ‘Coccus’. First he was Consul in Muscat for five years, then Consul-General at Bushire, and after Lord Curzon’s naval visit he became Resident in the Persian Gulf. Wassmuss, his colleague and rival in Bushire said of him in a report to Berlin: ‘He has no doubt regarded it as his life work to bring the whole of the Persian Gulf under English rule and governance.’ And *The Times* published an appreciation of his work:

Successive Sultans of Muscat and ruling Sheikhs of Bahrein and Koweit looked upon him as a personal friend and rejoiced to see the Resident’s yacht, the R.I.M.S. *Lawrence*, cast anchor in their ports. The chiefs of the Trucial coast admired him even when relations were most strained and the Royal Navy awaited their formal amends. Persian Governors-General of the Fars and Governors of the Gulf ports gave him their confidence and he in return gave them his support. Between these rulers in their respective areas Sir Percy Cox was always a unifying influence. Patient, courteous, inscrutable, untiring, his signature at the foot of a document was a guarantee to all that, so far as in him lay, the undertakings made therein would be guaranteed by all parties, and of their good faith. That, in these troublous times, was itself a powerful influence in the maintenance of peace and the growth of mutual confidence.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, February 22nd, 1937.

Thus at the outbreak of war the Persian Gulf was ready to serve as England's base in the Mesopotamian campaign. And before the Turkish declaration of war had been made Bahrein, Fao, and Kurna had been occupied by the British.

What is the situation in the Gulf to-day? Not much is to be found about it either in books or in newspapers. This is part of the Indian Government's system of defence. Only a visit to the place can give any information. The objective of such a tour was Bahrein, the present-day centre of British authority in the Gulf.

'It is absolutely impossible for you to go to Bahrein. The English won't let any one in.' So the new arrival in Baghdad is told by Germans, Swiss, and Arabs. Equal difficulties are promised for Koweit—even the diplomatists of friendly Powers can hardly obtain permits. Moreover, frightful stories are told of Bahrein—no hotel, nowhere to put up except in dirty Arab hovels, no drinking water, a damp heat compared with which even the dry heat of Baghdad seems like mountain air.

When, after all this, a permit from the Political Agent in Bahrein arrives, 'provided that accommodation can be found', the first reaction is the suspicion: 'Ah! A veiled form of refusal; for there is no accommodation.' But behold, a friendly official at the British Consulate, being asked whether it would perhaps be possible to spend the night at the American missionary's house, suggests sending a wire to the Adviser of the Bahrein Government. The reply brings permission to sleep at the Government rest-house.

So the sensitiveness of the English in respect of the Persian Gulf still exists. But since the War and since Iran has grown stronger the situation in the Gulf has changed. In the days of Cox and Wassmuss there was hardly any difference between Persian and Arabic sheikhs. The tribal heads of the Bushire and Lingah districts had for decades been more or less independent. Since the twenties of this century they have suddenly been faced with the choice of submitting to the strong new Government of Shah Rheza, or of disappearing from public life in the prisons of Teheran. Many have disappeared. The English have all at once been deprived of the numerous small intriguing parties

with whom pacts were so easily made. They are faced with a single one—the Shah's Government.

One episode has shocked them more than anything else—the fate of the Sheikh of Mohammerah. Mohammerah lies diagonally opposite Basra, in the midst of extensive date-palm groves, at the confluence of the Karun and the Shatt-el-Arab, only a few miles above Abadan, that is to say above the largest oil refinery in the world, where the British Admiralty's tankers take in the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company's oil. Particularly close bonds of friendship united the British Government with the Sheikh of this strategically important point, especially since the end of the War. His splendid palace was reflected in the waters of the Shatt-el-Arab, the festivities and the drinking parties on his yacht were far-famed. From such a drinking party the Sheikh was one day taken and conveyed to Teheran—not in a car and with a magnificent suite as he was accustomed, but upon the back of a common pack-ass, across the arid, burning hills, through wide deserts, mile after mile northwards to the capital of the Shah whose order he had not obeyed promptly.

Opinions were sharply divided among the English over this affair. The Indian Government was anxious to help the kidnapped Sheikh. Their view was that if they did not save him, the word of their Agents in the Gulf would no longer carry weight, for the English Agents had promised the Sheikh full support. The Foreign Office, on the other hand, to whom friendly relations with Teheran were all-important, did not wish to intervene on the Sheikh's behalf. The Sheikh was left to his fate. He remained in Teheran until his death.

The affair of the Sheikh of Mohammerah which occurred half-way through the nineteen-twenties was only the first stage. It proved to the world of the Persian Gulf that the Shah was determined to re-establish full sovereignty within Iranian State territory. The second stage was the prohibition to the Imperial Airways in 1931 to fly across Persian territory. The third was the removal of the Gulf Resident's seat from Bushire to Koweit in 1934. The fourth followed in April 1935, and was the 'voluntary' removal of the British naval bases at Henjam and Basidu on the Persian side to Bahrein. Over this affair Sir Arnold Wilson, former Resident at Basra, then High Commissioner in

Bagdad, later director of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, put one or two awkward questions to Sir John Simon, the Foreign Secretary: 'Has the British sovereignty which extended over part of the island of Basidu now been officially given up? Is it not a fact that the British flag has flown there for over a hundred years; that the place has repeatedly been declared to be British territory; and has not the Persian Government frequently had this point put to them?' Sir John Simon could find no other answer than that local climatic conditions were unhealthy, and the place was not British territory; his Majesty's Government had recently decided that their interests in the Persian Gulf would best be served by the removal of the station to Bahrein on the Arabian side of the Gulf.

This play of questions and answers shows how ambiguous the situation is in the Persian Gulf. The English position rests upon treaties of friendship and protection with individual sheikhs. The Persian Government disputes the right of the Persian sheikhs to make such agreements. The question is how far Persian rule extends? It has been shown that at one time it included the present-day Soviet Russian part of the Caucasus, the western portion of Afghanistan until close by Kabul, the greater part of present-day Iraq, and on the Arabian side of the Gulf the island of Bahrein. In many cases the losses of territory did not occur as a result of war with the ensuing re-drawing of frontiers. But outlying portions of the vast empire that had grown internally weak gradually seceded; a border chief would make himself independent; new political conditions would arise without being legally confirmed.

To-day the English are only to be found in Maidan-i-Naftun, Ahwaz, and Abadan on the east side of the water, the beginning and end of the Anglo-Iranian pipe-lines; not under the British flag but by reason of the oil concession acquired by William Knox d'Arcy in 1901. This concession was withdrawn by Teheran in 1932. The matter was brought before the League of Nations. England was obliged to pay large sums of money. But financial sacrifices are of small importance compared with the necessity for providing for the British fleet in case of war.

The atmosphere on board the ships running to and from

Bahrein is somehow reminiscent of a Joseph Conrad novel. It is the old Gulf atmosphere of the days when the Persian Gulf was a unity, when everybody knew everybody else, when important Europeans—politicians and merchant princes—were still on terms of friendship with the sheikhs. A party of old Gulf men is sitting together on the English steamer of the Basra-Bombay line; we are waiting for the tide to carry us across the bar of the Shatt-el-Arab. The captain tells of the days when the ships of the Mespers, now British India Steamship Navigation Company, used to run full steam into the trough between the sandbanks until they stuck, and then wait for the next tide to give them a fresh start. The Bahrein Agent of the Mespers and a pensioned naval officer are gossiping about mutual acquaintances—Lady Cox passed through a fortnight ago to visit the old places, Baghdad and Bushire and Muscat, where her husband once ruled; a prominent English M.P., an expert on the Near East, who did not do well in the Gulf, is criticized.

Two nights later there is a rattle of anchors in a stormy sea. The ship's strong searchlight shows three large motor dhows bumping into one another and into the side of the ship. White-clad Arabs drag at heavy cables to hold the boats. Coolies and passengers are shouting as if everything were in imminent danger of capsizing. Two English women are lifted on to the ship's ladder, soaked to the skin, and carried on board. Dark-skinned Indians work their way from the farthest boat to the nearest. Veiled women cower in the darkest corners of the dhows, shapeless black bundles of terror. Arabs and Indians who have been cooking, praying, and sleeping in the steerage for two days, try to get off with their bundles and baskets, with sheep and turkeys, against the stream of those who are unloading and trying to come up. The purser is anxious—thirty thousand rupees' worth of gold and silver is to be brought aboard. A single unlucky roller, and the precious cargo will be at the bottom of the sea.

It is after midnight by the time we are sitting in the first shore-going boat. The air is warm. Sea, sky, boat and faces are black. Only the tropical suits of the Europeans and the robes of the Arabs show up against the surrounding darkness. The doctor, the shipping agent and his assistant are discussing a

Dutch freighter that has been unable to discharge for two days on account of the weather. They debate how a dhow that has sunk with a cargo of cement may best be raised, because on its account ships are at present obliged to anchor even farther out than usual.

In addition to this older generation whose life has been spent in the Gulf, who curse the Gulf and love it, a new generation has grown up. It lives in the restless atmosphere of oil. It consists of engineers, young Americans, young Englishmen. They have contracts lasting eighteen months or two or three years. The Gulf does not interest them. It is a short halt on their way that leads from California to Mexico, the East Indies, Bahrein and Texas. They erect boring-derricks, lay pipe-lines, build refineries. They have absolutely no sense of history. They regard the Arabs from the point of view of a London charwoman used to every modern convenience—they see only dirt and backwardness and incomprehensible customs. As soon as the eighteen or twenty-four or thirty-six months of their contracts have expired they drop into a deck-chair with a sigh of relief and say: 'This is the moment for which I have been waiting for twenty-four months.' They all say it, they say it all one morning, they keep on repeating it to each other, so it must be sincere. They have no feeling of attachment to the island upon which they have lived for two years. Their home is the camp and the refinery. The camps are all alike—standardized comfort. The refineries vary according to the year in which they were built. The most recent are the most sought after.

The old Gulf men had and have their secrets. There were and are the omniscient, the silent men of the Intelligence Service in all walks of life. The foreigner is kept strictly from all knowledge of internal conditions. But once any one 'belongs', he is treated as a man and a brother. The oil world is quite different. It is cloven by suspicion of competitors. The atmosphere of secrecy is as thick as in a large family of children just before Christmas; Standard Oil on one side—Iraq Petroleum Company on the other. The ship's authorities tactfully put the two factions at different tables. Most reticent of all is a couple of geologists, an Englishman and a Frenchman, who have been working on the mainland for eighteen months on behalf of Oil



Concession Ltd. (a daughter company of Iraq Petroleum). During this time they have driven to death three new Fords across the desert and through marshy salt lakes. They belong to a different category from the young men of the Bapco (Bahrein Petroleum Company). They have worked in Kirkuk and Mosul, they have explored Luristan, they have prospected for oil in Syria. They are inclined to dismiss as wild rumours all discoveries of oil within the sphere of the Iraq Petroleum Company, until they see that whoever is talking to them has definite information. Then they admit just as much as their interlocutor knows and no more.

Possibly the oil men will one day become Gulf men. They have only been there for six years, after all. And there must be some who do not merely come to search for oil and to build, but who remain as permanent directors of works. New traditions will grow up, new oil-Gulf personalities will arise, and their fame will reach from Koweit to Muscat.

Waking up in the rest-house of the Bahrein Government in a room the ceiling of which is formed of reed mats over wooden laths, the walls of which are three feet thick, and which has deep window embrasures, is once again like something out of a novel by Conrad. The white-clad 'boy' who brings morning tea to your bedside and asks when you would like to have your bath comes from Portuguese India. His uncle is cook and manager of the rest-house. There are four guest rooms, a large airy lounge with comfortable chairs, and a dining-room. In the early summer of 1938 this rest-house had been in existence a bare four months. All the visitors to date had written their names in the visitors' book. So far they had been only English people or Indians.

Bahrein is not a single island but a group of three. In the north is the former capital, Muharraq, an old town, containing the palaces of the Sheikhs and of the rich pearl merchants, and beautifully designed bazaars. It stands on a natural bay covered with sailing ships. Since the English have established a Customs house in Manama, in the northern part of the largest island, Manama has become the capital. The reigning Sheikh has built himself a new palace here. The residences of the Political Agent

and of the Adviser stand surrounded by glorious gardens near the shore. Government buildings and a law court have been erected. Contrary to what has been done in Baghdad, the English have not spoilt the island scene by putting up modern buildings. They are keeping to the traditional Bahrein style—heavy, compact, two-story houses with thick walls; offices and warehouses on the ground floor, verandas as wide as an ordinary room all round the first floor, behind these the living-quarters, sheltered from every direct ray of the sun, so constructed that they will catch every little breath of air that blows.

Bahrein's treasures have always lain at the bottom of the sea—the pearls that laid the foundation of the island's fame and riches a thousand years ago; the springs of fresh water that rise in the bed of the ocean and for which divers descend with goat-skin bags; the sole building material of this crumbling desert world, the slabs of limestone that are hewn from the floor of the sea at low tide; and, finally, the oil.

The visitor who goes in a sail-ferry from Manama to Muharraaq, who wanders through the Arab quarters in secluded havens of contentment sees nothing of the oil. Elsewhere in the Arabic world there are children carrying heavy loads, crouching for ten to fourteen hours a day at weaving-loom; children begging in the streets, squatting in dirty courtyards, suffering from boils and sore eyes. In Bahrein the children have learnt how to play. They run about in long white shirts or perhaps in nothing but a little triangular loin-cloth, busy and happy, down to the sea to sail toy boats that they have made themselves. They are not stooping and prematurely aged, but upright, dark brown little people. The second experience that is quite unlike anything else in the world is the first—vain—attempt to see the Adviser. Not a soul is to be seen in the courtyard of his residence nor in the garage and stables, no one to guard the stairs leading up to the first floor. No one upstairs on the veranda. The doors into the living-rooms are all wide open—books, pictures, carpets, all kinds of valuables are lying about and give proof of the confidence and security prevailing in this little island State.

The Adviser who has brought about this halcyon state of affairs is Mr. Dalrymple Belgrave, tall, lean, and blue-eyed. He

gives the impression of being astonishingly young for so responsible a post. He was formerly in the Sudanese service. The Sudan is England's model colonial administration. The aim there is not Europeanization but further development along the lines of native laws and customs. Mr. Belgrave has applied the same principle in Bahrein with excellent results. He keeps order with a handful of British soldiers. The budget is balanced, roads, schools and hospitals have been built, new schools established. One of the most important regulations probably is the strict maintenance of the prohibition of alcohol. Yet only fifteen miles away, at the oil camp, cocktail parties are given and whisky is drunk by the gallon. The future success of Mr. Belgrave's work will depend upon whether he succeeds in continuing to keep apart the two worlds, the five hundred Western men of the oil world and the one hundred and fifty thousand Arabs who belong to the old Gulf world.

A brand new taxi takes us from Manama southwards through date plantations that grow more and more sparse, until the last sand-swept palms merge into pure desert. First-class black asphalted roads run like something alien across the dazzling sandy plain, motor-buses rush past, as well as taxis and smart private cars. Right and left hundreds of hillocks are to be seen, the sandy burial mounds of a forgotten people. Some believe them to be Sumerian, others Phoenician. Manama means 'the place of sleep', Muharraq 'the place of burning'. The Arabs take this to signify that the northern island was a crematorium for the mainland Arabs and the southern a burial place.

The sky is white with condensed moisture, the sun a disk behind the haze, burning hot, the desert a yellowish white. On the horizon shining white shapes appear—the gigantic, silver-painted oil tanks. We are approaching the oil refinery. There are black outlines against the whitish sky, chimneys, towers, refrigerators, and a barbed wire fence all round. At the gate stands a member of the Bahrein police force as sentry, wearing a brilliant red head-kerchief with a vertical knot in it. From the construction office we pass to the manager's office. This does not lie within the refinery but in the residential camp, a few miles distant. Between the two is a series of huts made of green

twigs for the native workmen who are already called coolies here, perhaps because their foremen all come from India.

Another barbed wire fence, another sentry with a scarlet knot in his head-dress, a few green shrubs and little plots of grass growing in the desert soil in front of flat, single-storied houses. A long row of new motor-cars in front of the manager's office. The manager's large room. He points to a map giving a bird's-eye view of Bahrein. In the north are the inhabited districts, in the centre of the island the desert, and in the middle of this desert a sort of lunar crater, an angular oval. Within this oval lies the oil, outside it only salt water has been found up to date.

A young engineer from Texas assumes the role of guide. We drive straight into the lunar landscape in one of the new cars. It is a god-forsaken place. The crumbling crater hills are not high, the highest not more than three hundred feet, but in the flat surroundings it seems repellent and unfriendly. We drive to the first hole bored in the winter of 1931 to 1932. There is not much to see. An upright black tube in the ground, a dark shaft for the water-cooling apparatus, two pipe-lines. Near this first well are a few derelict buildings—the remains of the first offices and the first dwelling-houses. They are six years old and have already fallen to ruin. So quickly do the oil men act when a place proves unsuitable for living in on account of the nocturnal emanations of heat from the hill.

We drive on to the new derricks—iron frameworks, a hundred feet high, in the middle of which is the boring tool with a tubular stem that eats its way into the ground. As soon as one length of tubing disappears in the earth, a second is screwed on to the top and so it continues, rattling away in the merciless, dazzling heat, with water-coolers for the metal, yard after yard through the rock. Up to 1937 boring had been done to a depth of two thousand feet; in the summer of 1938 the first attempt was made to double that distance. A hole of such a depth takes eight weeks to bore.

We go on to the central depot where the oil from several wells accumulates, where the superfluous gases are separated by means of complicated machinery, and are expelled into the air in a continuous flame at the end of a narrow tube. By day this

adds slightly to the heat, by night it is a fiery beacon visible from afar.

The layman who has often heard of immeasurable seas of oil beneath the surface of the earth wonders why it should be necessary to keep on boring fresh holes—forty are at present in use in Bahrein and six new ones being made. Would it not be easier to dig one large hole and pump the whole lot out through that? The engineer explains laughing that the interior of the earth is not as simple as all that. The oil lies in separate rocky chambers, some higher up, some lower down. Sometimes there is so great an admixture of salt water that it is not worth while to pump it up at all.

We pursue our way to the residential camp. The young man is very proud of this. The company has built it 'regardless'. Every requirement is catered for. There are single-storied family houses with three, four, or five rooms, according to salaries, with wonderful bathrooms and kitchens. The company provides furniture. The employee need only add books, carpets, and pictures according to taste. New, air-conditioned bachelor houses are in process of construction. There is a common dining-room, served by Chinese cooks from Texas; a hospital with an operating theatre, an X-ray room, and the most up-to-date equipment; a hostel for the six nurses. New ones are constantly required because each one who comes out gets married at once. We proceed to the theatre, the cinema, and the club house, in a side wing of which is the school. Here little fair-haired American girls are sitting with their eyes on the desert, learning about George Washington who was also interested in oil. The main room in the club house is just now occupied by a women's gymnastics class. Our guide points out three tennis courts, a cricket pitch, a swimming pool, a golf course. The mention of a golf course calls up a vision of cool green lawns. In this case, however, the golf course is a stretch of burning desert like any other stretch of desert, with artificial holes. Every little scrap of green is a priceless treasure. An English gardener has been occupied for three years in making things grow. 'He has done wonders,' says the engineer. Yes, he has indeed done wonders. Here is a plot of grass, there a row of blossoming oleander bushes, in front of the Nurses' Home a

border of flowers. Brave little green patches in the barren yellow immensity of the desert. Two days without water and the three years' labour would be utterly lost. One's thoughts wander back to the ruined houses beside the first oil-well that are six years old. How long will this luxury colony live, to which everything apart from building-blocks and tar must be brought from overseas—wood, cement, steel, corrugated iron, mosquito-netting, oil-paint, grass seed?

We go on to the refinery. Only an oil expert can really understand and enjoy a refinery. While the Anglo-Iranian's refinery at Abadan is the largest in the world, that in Bahrein is the most up to date. The company has been even more lavish here than at the camp. The very latest methods are used. Even two Germans were admitted to the closely guarded precincts of the island for a few months in order to set up some machinery that is made only in Germany.

The refinery was built only two years ago. The English mechanical engineer on board said disapprovingly: 'It was put up much too quickly.' That is the way Americans work. For the first few years the crude oil was run across the narrow arm of the sea to Sitra, the third of the Bahrein islands, and out into the sea to a tank buoy. To-day all the various oil products, apart from train oil, are taken over to Sitra in separate pipes—various grades of petrol, diesel oil, fuel oil, petroleum. In addition, coke, gas, and asphalt are produced for the company's own requirements.

Before the building of the refinery was decided upon, a secret conference met in New York during October and November of 1935. Very little got into the newspapers about it. Those taking part were, in addition to the California Standard Oil—the parent company of the Bapco (Bahrein Petrol Company)—the Anglo-Iranian, Shell Union Oil, Shell Transport, and Standard Oil of New Jersey. The subject of the conference was where and by whom Bahrein oil should be marketed. For the California Standard Oil had no transport or selling organization of its own. The terms offered by the opposing firms were evidently unacceptable. Instead of uniting with the three big ones, California Oil resolved to come to an arrangement with its most serious competitor, the Texas Oil Company. In 1938

Bapco became Caltex (California and Texas Oil Company). The refinery was built at a cost of twelve million dollars, and extended even while in process of construction. Thereby a new and powerful competitor in the oil world has come into existence east of the Suez Canal. For the year 1937 the company declared a net profit of four million dollars with a daily average production of twenty-five thousand barrels. In 1938 it is expecting a net profit of something like eight million dollars.

A few details about the secrets of oil and drilling on the Arabian coast may be gathered during a trip through the Gulf. But the chief mystery remains unsolved—why are the Americans boring for oil here and not the English who have spent so much money, thought, and diplomacy in making the island secure? The English Press passes lightly over this point if ever it mentions Bahrein oil. Engineers and geologists turn blank faces to the world and have no opinion to offer. 'First come, first served,' they murmur with a smile. If the reply is made: 'But the first to strike oil was an Englishman, Major Holmes, who is now working near Muscat. And the Bahrein concession was offered to the Anglo-Iranian. Why didn't they take it up?' an expression of embarrassment comes over their faces. An engineer suggests that probably the Anglo-Iranian did not believe that there was really much oil in Bahrein. None of this sounds convincing, for the British Admiralty has no more ardent desire than to strike oil in some place under the British flag.

To the first question may be added a second: 'Why are none but young English engineers appointed and trained in the American refinery, so that a quota of seventy per cent of the higher employees will be British?' Out of questions one and two arises a third: 'Have secret undertakings been entered upon between the English and the Americans?'

The Foreign Office could not wish to put a fresh burden upon the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, for whose very existence it had to fight before the League of Nations. The acceptance of an oil concession on an island in the Persian Gulf, to which Iran makes claim, would, however, have meant such a burden. The Americans, on the other hand, are learning afresh from year to year that 'peaceful' commercial imperialism is a Utopia. It is not difficult to acquire concessions in foreign countries

against a payment of good dollars. To hold them without recourse to arms, once they have shown themselves to be really productive, sometimes proves impossible. The Americans are growing cautious. The revocation of the American oil concession in Iraq in the summer of 1938 was a consequence of the conclusions drawn by America from the Mexican affair. In Bahrein things are much pleasanter for the Americans. Bahrein is the most important point on the British line of defence between Basra and India, protected by British ships and aircraft. There is no tendency to nationalism. England's aim is less to make profit from the oil than to have security in the Gulf. In case of war, if the English needed Bahrein oil they would buy it. Already the chief markets for the oil are Suez, Karachi, Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, Singapore, and Durban, that is to say, British Empire ports.

Thus at Bahrein perhaps a first step may have been taken quite unobtrusively, without the knowledge or interference of the American isolationists, towards that Anglo-Saxon co-operation at which both Governments are aiming, and in which the border line between commercial and military policy is hard to define. And though the English may prefer the spicy cooking of their Goanese cooks to that of the American-Chinese in the camp, though American and English women may not always live together in perfect harmony, it is very clear that co-operation and good fellowship exist between the men of the two nations.

To-day all Great Britain's energy is concentrated on the Arabian side of the Gulf. Pirate sheikhs have overnight turned into air sheikhs and oil sheikhs. The extension of the new air line began in 1931 after an enforced surrender on the Persian side. Basra, Bahrein, and Sharjah are the ports. This is all part of the direct air route to India. It is often called the Suez Canal of the air, and is most carefully secured. Alexandria, Lydda, Baghdad, Basra, Bahrein, Sharjah, Gwadar, Karachi, are the most important landing stages in the Near East—all upon territory so closely connected with Great Britain by treaty, protectorate, or mandate, that British troops can be stationed there to keep guard.



This air route, strange as it may sound, is at once a water and a land air line, that is to say it serves for both land 'planes and hydroplanes, although it extends over some twelve hundred and fifty miles of desert and steppes. The hydroplanes land about sixty miles outside Baghdad on Lake Habbanieh. All the other ports are on the sea. In some cases the land and water ports are far apart. In Bahrein, for example, the land-line port is on the island of Muharraq, the hydroplane port as well as the military airport on the opposite island of Manama.

The ceremony for the inauguration of the new airport at Basra took place at the end of March 1938. Sir John Ward, the governor of the port, the uncrowned king of Basra, built it after having made the Shatt-el-Arab and the seaport of Basra available to cargo shipping and medium-sized steamers by persevering dredging since the end of the War. The greatest pride of Basra—once a sleepy little city of lagoons and canals and steep bridges—is its up-to-date air hotel, containing a swimming pool, tennis courts, and fifty bedrooms. People come by 'plane from Baghdad and Koweit, from Abadan and Bahrein, even from India and Palestine, to spend the week-end at this most modern of Near Eastern hotels, to admire the far-famed colour schemes in its rooms, to drink whiskies and soda in the spacious restaurant.

The first civil aircraft landed at Basra in April 1936. So the flying tradition is still young. However, in the two years that have elapsed between that date and the opening of the new airport, two thousand aeroplanes have come to earth there. Provisions for night landing have been made after the latest American model. The searchlights are visible for over a hundred and ten miles in fine weather. Extra strong light signals have been constructed for use during sandstorms. Three batteries of three million candle-power illuminate the airport.

The ordinary passenger alighting from his 'plane at Baghdad or Basra sees only the commercial or technical success of the rapidly extending air line. As far as Baghdad he has the choice of English, German, Dutch, French, and Egyptian 'planes. He sees international co-operation—the open door for all. What he does not see is the many hundred units of British military aircraft, stationed in the deserts of the Nile land, of the land of the

two rivers, before the gates of Koweit, upon the islands of Bahrein, and on the mainland of Arabia, keeping just as careful a watch here as do British battleships between Gibraltar and Suez.

Oil was first struck in Bahrein, then in Koweit and El Hasa. To-day geologists are busy all along the coast of Arabia down as far as Muscat. The districts are divided between Americans and Englishmen. New treaties of friendship and concession are being concluded. In 1936 Sheikh Hamid-ibn-Isah-el-Kalifah came from Bahrein to pay a state visit to London. In March 1938 the Sultan of Oman and Muscat was received by the King in London. Gwadar, the air base on the coast of Baluchistan, near the Iranian frontier, on the other side of the sea, is his. In February and March 1938 the Countess of Athlone, the King's aunt, made a tour across Arabia with her husband. She visited King ibn Saud, whose domains extend from the Red Sea to the Persian Gulf, and from whom came the El Hasa concession. She went on to Sheikh Saud Abdullah Jelui, at Alkhubar, the mainland headquarters of the California-Arabia Standard Oil Company. And finally she went to Bahrein, where the English rule, the Americans prospect for oil, and the Bahreini, thanks to Japanese competition, hardly ever dive for pearls nowadays.

In August 1938 advantage was taken of the visit of the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia to raise the Koweit question. The sultanate of Koweit is a small triangular piece of land between Iraq and Iran, the third side of which lies along the Gulf. Koweit has recently become the seat of the British Gulf Resident. When the English were still in control in Iraq, they granted the Sultan of Koweit freedom from taxation for all his date plantations upon Iraqi soil. When the English concluded the treaty of friendship and alliance with Iraq and resigned the mandate, they forgot to mention the Sultan of Koweit's dates. The Iraqi not only began to tax them, but went further and alleged that some of the palm groves were not even the property of the Sultan. The men in authority in India felt that it was better for England to pay the costs rather than to allow the friction to continue.

The second Koweit problem is its powerful neighbour ibn Saud. In his youth he lived as a fugitive with the Sultan of

Koweit. The English hint that he owes a debt of gratitude. King ibn Saud is obviously of another mind. A few years ago he closed the frontier against Koweit. The frontier—it is necessary to continue recalling this—may be a straight line on the map, but in reality it is the desert, sand and heat and loneliness. Formerly the people of Koweit had all the trade with the Arabian hinterland in their hands. Now it is being slowly pushed farther south towards El Hasa, ibn Saud's Gulf province. This irritates the people of Koweit, and the discovery of oil has only just come to solace them.

In August 1938 *The Times* shed some light on the Koweit problem:

If Iraqi-Arab relations were less friendly than they are, both would be casting covetous eyes on the Koweiti territory. Not a few Iraqi affect to find something anomalous in the independence of a State that can be represented as rounding off Iraqi territory geographically, and in the economic sphere offers an ideal harbour as a substitute for Basra, if ever Iranian claims in regard to the waterway of the Shatt-el-Arab, shared by both countries, threatened to become embarrassing.<sup>1</sup>

In these words are included—or at least indicated—all the troubles of the Gulf. Iranian claims to the Shatt-el-Arab—a question which was officially settled in the treaty of friendship between Iraq and Iran in 1937, but the main points of which—rights of navigation and the formation of a river commission—remain undecided. Iraq's claims to Koweit. Ibn Saud's claims. The latter, which are most transiently referred to in *The Times* article, are in reality probably the most serious. Who is to say that some day the former pirate sheikhs, now air and oil sheikhs on the Arabian coast, may not be treated exactly as was the Sheikh of Mohammerah? That King ibn Saud will not one day incorporate the whole of the coastal territory in his already frequently enlarged kingdom? In 1927 Sir Percy Cox remarked on this point:

The great Wahhabi ruler, ibn Sa'ud, was and is a very dear friend, and I have discussed his ambitions with him many times. It may be of interest if I tell you briefly what they are. Practically

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, August 17th, 1938.

he thinks that he is justified, in principle, in regaining any territory that his forefathers had a century ago, whether as territory or as a 'sphere of influence'. 'Oman was in their sphere of influence. Bereimi itself was actually in Wahhabi hands, and that accounts for the fact that even now a large section of the population are Wahhabi in principle. The Sheikhs of the Pirate Coast, too, still retain latent Wahhabi sympathies, and would show their feelings more openly. In my time, before the War, we had intimate relations with ibn Sa'ud; we had a treaty with him under which we paid him a subsidy; and it was part of the agreement that he should not attack or molest any friend of ours, or any chiefs who were in treaty relations with us. Our friends were to be his friends. After the War, however, we had to reduce expenditure. We could not go on paying the subsidies we had paid before and during the War. We had to make reductions. One of those reduced was ibn Sa'ud. He was hard hit, but he quite realized that we could not go on paying this for ever. But what he felt was: 'Up to now I have been under specific obligation not to annoy the British Government by any policy that I pursue. As long as I enjoyed a pension or subsidy from them it was incumbent on me to abide by their conditions; but now that they have felt obliged to stop any payment to me, I think I am entitled to pursue my own policy and work out my own destiny as I think best.' He is now doing that. Up to now he has been extraordinarily correct and statesmanlike in all he has done. We have never been able to put him wrong.<sup>1</sup>

This report shows at once English political methods in Arabia and the weak points of the British position on the Arabian side of the Gulf. It is true that in the eleven years since Cox uttered those words the connection between England and ibn Saud has grown much closer again—it is not known upon what bargains this is based. But the King's aunt would hardly have travelled across the whole of ibn Saud's dominions purely for pleasure, nor can the invitation extended to ibn Saud's two sons to go to London a few months later have been without purpose. The situation is stable for the moment, it is true, but the possibility that the little domains of the coast sheikhs may one day become subject to the great kingdom in the interior just as the coast and hill sheikhs on the Iranian side were obliged to submit to the Teheran Government remains an ever-present danger.

That is why Bahrein is so important to the English. Islands,

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of the Central Asian Society*, 1927, p. 40.

even if they are only twenty miles off the mainland, are less easily overrun and swallowed up than strips of coast. Nevertheless, even Bahrein is disputed. Iran has asserted a right to sovereignty. It can claim that the number of years during which the islands were under Persian overlordship is many times greater than that of any other ruler in Bahrein. It began asserting its claims against those of England in 1927 at Geneva and has never since ceased. Moreover, it cut the cable to Bahrein, and allows no traveller who has a British visa for Bahrein to set foot upon Iranian soil.

England for its part makes no pretension to ownership. It points out that the family of Hamid-ibn-Isah-el-Kalifah, the reigning sheikh, occupied the islands from Koweit in 1783, and since then has ruled there independently. Treaties between Great Britain and the sheikh's family have existed for over a hundred years. That gives the English no sort of right by international law to government in Bahrein. Theoretically the sheikh, even according to the English thesis, might say any day: 'I shall conduct my own foreign policy from now onwards instead of leaving it to the Political Agent. I shall have the passports of foreigners visiting these islands stamped with a Bahrein visa instead of a British one.' Theoretically he might also say: 'Since it is not possible for me to defend my island kingdom myself and since I need help, I shall at all events claim the help of one of my neighbours. I shall put myself under the protection of ibn Saud.' Or else: 'I shall put myself under the protection of the Shah at Teheran.' Since the population of Bahrein is mainly Shi'ite—though the leading families are Sunnite—the latter suggestion would actually be welcomed by a section of the Bahreini.

In practice the situation is different. The English are on the spot, with a small Gulf Fleet, with a network of air bases all over Arabia, of which only a few are known to the world at large, while the rest are in places where no one ever goes—except possibly some one like Freya Stark visiting the unknown country of Hadramaut, or the daughter of a Gulf Resident losing her way in an aeroplane.

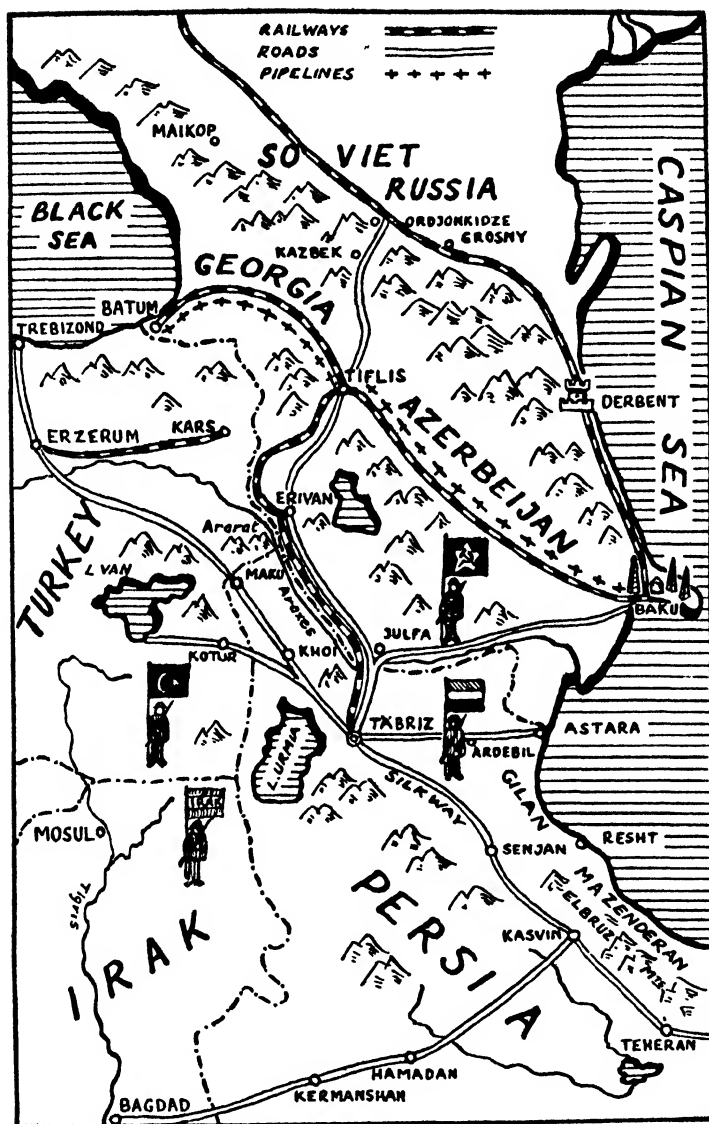
Great Britain's weak points in the Gulf have been shown—her loss of influence on the eastern coast, the uncertainty of the

sheikhs' political situation. But this does not mean that the English position itself is weak. It is secured at so many points that even the failure of one here and there is a loss that may be survived. The English are popular. The successors of 'Coccus', the real Gulf men who exist to this day, are doing good work. They take no land except pieces of uninhabited desert to make airports. They bring money into the country. They introduce a certain amount of organization, hospitals, irrigation. And they leave the people in peace. No active patriotism is demanded of them, no universal military service, no excessive taxation is imposed in order to fill State coffers. The farther south an Arab lives, the more closely he is bound up with the desert, the more he is an individualist. To live in peace is more important to him than to be secure and well-off. To live in peace, that is to say indolence. To live in peace, in order that he may pursue his tribal and family feuds, to-day as of yore. He can do all that under the English rule. Piracy is the one thing he has been gradually broken of. One question, however, to which only time can supply the answer, is what will happen to him when the oil camps become oil cities.

#### THE LAND-BRIDGE OF THE CAUCASUS AND AZERBEIJAN

Geography is full of strange anomalies. Iran is so far east, so continentally Asiatic, that it is considered rather as part of Central Asia than of Hither Asia. Nevertheless a line runs north from Teheran through the Caspian Sea straight to Europe. For whatever may be thought of the political characteristics of the present-day Soviet Union, geographically the Volga basin belongs to Europe. And somewhere in the south and east of the Volga basin, in the Caucasus mountains, Europe merges into Asia. Hence the word Caucasian.

This point of transition has always been a scene of strife. In the Persian Gulf three States—Iran, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia—as well as numerous coastal sheikhs confront one another; three of the great sects of Islam—Shiites, Sunnites, and Wahabites—impinge upon one another. But on the Caucasian land-bridge various races are crowded together—Turks of Azerbaijan, Ar-



THE LAND-BRIDGE OF THE CAUCASUS AND AZERBEIJAN

menians of the province of Erivan, Georgians in Tiflis and Baku, all of them intermingled with Tartars, Russians, and Iranians and many others. Moslems are settled beside Armenian Christians and Orthodox Russians. And latterly there has been an admixture of Soviets, though Communism as a creed has probably not taken very firm root there.

The strategic importance of the neck of land is twofold—it forms the sally-port for irruptions from north to south and vice versa; and at the same time at Tabriz it commands one of the most important of road junctions in Asia.

In ancient days this gate had to be secured by the civilized peoples of the south against the incursions of the barbarians from the north—Scythians, Cimmerians, and so forth. Fierce as were the feuds between the Persian empire and Rome, on this point they were agreed. From the year 533 on, in fact, Byzantium paid to Persia an annual sum of one thousand pounds of gold for the upkeep and manning of the fortifications of the Caucasus.

The most important fortress was Derbent on the northern extremity of the range and on the shore of the Caspian Sea. 'Derbend' is the Turkish word for gate. Derbent is the starting point of the Caucasian Wall that commands all the passes, the towers and walls of which are still standing. In the course of its history Derbent has had many names according to the power ruling at the time—such as *Porta portarum* and *Bab el Abwab*. All the names embody the idea of a gateway. The upper part of the town is built on the slope of the hill; houses and gardens cling to the rock like swallows' nests. The mosque and the palace with its Persian kiosks and fountains were reminders, before the War at all events, of the many lords to whom the city had been subject. As long as it was a border town it was of such importance that after its capture in 1722 Peter the Great caused the silver keys of its iron gates to be brought to him. Thereby he commanded the northern gateway to the Caucasus, and the way was opened for carrying out the instructions contained in his Will.

The high mountains of the Caucasus, however, still remained to be overcome. They gave Peter the Great's successors, down to the railway engineers of the nineteenth century, plenty to do.



How difficult the conquest of this mountain region was may be gauged from the methods that the great Mongol prince Timur Lenk was obliged to use when by the conquest of Georgia he reversed the direction of the barbarian invasions, and made them go from south to north.

In order to overcome them, Timur found a new use for the baskets and ropes with which he had passed over the Indian Alps. The ropes by means of which and a portable structure he was lowered from the top of the Alps into the depths were a hundred and fifty ells in length. . . . Still more hazardous was the use made of these hanging baskets and flying tackle in the Georgian campaign. In order to attack the enemy sheltering in inaccessible rocky caves, the soldiers were let down the precipitous sides of the rock by means of these baskets and tackle, until they were opposite the caves and were able to thin out the ranks of the enemy by a rain of arrows; then they leapt into the midst of them from their aerial rafts, or if it was impossible to land in the caves, they threw blazing material into them and burnt them out with their store-houses and armouries. (Hammer-Purgstall.)

It is clear that people who inhabit mountains of this description will on the whole be able to live an independent life; for rulers of the warlike energy and inventive genius of Timur Lenk are rare. And in fact the Armenians and the Georgians have generally been semi-independent, and often wholly independent under their own princes. At times the country has been split up into several principalities. After the Mongol invasion and up to the time of the Russian advance it remained under the more or less slack overlordship of the Persians, though in a state of continual opposition to the Persian attempts to convert them. The Armenians and Georgians hate each other just as much as elsewhere Armenians and Kurds do. And the Armenians on Russian soil, having shown signs of nationalist ambitions in 1900, have been massacred here no less savagely than in Turkey.

The Turkoman tribes of Azerbaijan are less well off. Their country has almost continuously been the scene of warfare. From Tabriz, the capital of Azerbaijan, six important roads start—the road from Tabriz to Astara on the Caspian Sea across the Ardebil Pass; the road to Tiflis, the capital of Georgia, across the torrential River Araxes and the Julfa Pass; the road to Baku, that branches off near Julfa from the road to Tiflis;

the road to Erzerum over the Khoi Pass and through the rocky bar of Maku; the road to Lake Van across the Kotur Pass; and finally the road into the Iranian highlands by way of Senjan to Kasvin. This last, which runs on to Meshed and Turkestan, forms with the Tabriz-Erzerum-Trebizond road the famous Silk Way of ancient days, and is to this day called the Way to China by the natives. Up to the twentieth century none of these were roads in the modern sense of the word. They were simple caravan tracks, beaten out in thousands of years by the feet of the camels, the 'engineers of the East'. That is why the path taken by European merchants and the first envoys, as by all later travellers, was, contrary to that taken by the conquerors, through the Caspian Sea. And as time went on this internal sea route occupied a position parallel with that of the land route proper.

Every one invaded Tabriz—Persians and Byzantines, Arabs, Mongols, Turks, and Russians. Hence the very mixed population. Hence also their warlike disposition. No one has ever hitherto been able to hold Tabriz permanently; it has always gone back to Persia in the end. But it would be hard to bring about a final settlement. Even if the Turks have lost their intense urge to go east, the Soviets have inherited the Russian urge to go south, and the Iranians with the new pride of a reorganized political body have revived their northward drive, in the hope of regaining the lost Caucasian provinces.

The Russians appeared in Persia for the first time in 1664. Quarrels broke out immediately. The Russian mission, consisting of eight hundred men, had been received with the greatest hospitality in Ispahan and lodged in a vast palace. Then it was discovered that in reality these men were disguised merchants who alleged themselves to be diplomatic envoys in order to escape taxation. The Shah was furious, and the Russians were treated with contempt. This in its turn angered the Russians and they organized a Cossack invasion of the Caspian province of Mazenderan. This was the first Russian attempt upon Persian territory. The second has already been described—it was the first effort to take Georgia in 1723. After the death of Peter the Great everything was lost again, the Caspian Sea provinces as well as Baku and Derbent.

Meanwhile the English, who had arrived in the south a long time since, also appeared from the north. As seafarers, they preferred the Caspian Sea to any land route. An enterprising merchant, explorer and shipbuilder named John Elton first entered the Russian service. Then in 1739 he sailed down the Volga and across the sea to Resht carrying merchandise. At that time the capital of Persia lay in the east, at Meshed. Elton went back to London and said that Meshed was not to be reached by the East India Company's people through the Gulf, but that they might do so from the Caspian. He returned with British plenipotentiary powers, was given all necessary authorizations by the Russians, and a concession by the Persians, and built two splendid ships at Kazan. With these ships he sailed to Resht. There he quarrelled with the Russian Consul; and thereupon entered the service of the Persian Government.

Meantime the Russians had had a considerable shock. They already looked upon the Caspian as their sphere of influence, although only a part of its shores were actually under their rule. Elton's two ships were finer and more seaworthy than anything that had ever been seen in these waters. The Russians therefore refused to allow any further goods for the Englishman to go across their territory. They made him tempting offers to return to their service. His reply was to have a firman issued to him by Nadir Shah forbidding him to leave Persia. The Russians retorted by prohibiting all English trade in the Caspian Sea. The English enterprise was at an end and the commercial settlement in Resht was plundered. Russian domination over the Caspian had begun. It was still, it is true, contested. The Russians might, indeed, prevent the transit of British goods, but for the present they were unable to prevent the Shah from having ships built for him by his servant John Elton. John Elton organized a shipyard out of nothing. Trees were felled in the primeval forest, sails were woven from cotton, ropes were twisted out of flax. The natives were forced to work for nothing. That was the custom of the country. But it may be imagined that this energetic northerner demanded ten times as much work from his men as goes to a leisurely Oriental working day. The workmen loathed him. The Russians watched his activities wrathfully.

Shah Nadir, Elton's patron, was murdered in 1747. Elton refused to allow himself to be discouraged and continued building his ships. But four years later his men rose against him and he was shot. The ships fell to pieces again—more slowly than they had been built. And Russian dominion over this inland sea was undisputed. It was important for further operations on the isthmus, for it is the first line of defence on the eastern flank.

In the year 1796 the Russian drive southwards began in good earnest. The peace treaties of Gulistan (1813) and Turkoman-chai were stages along the road. But it was not until the year 1864 that the whole Caucasus was really conquered. The difficulties were obviously still as great as in the days of Timur Lenk. At the same time, however, the whole extent of the Russian front was pushed southwards. In 1840 a Russian naval station was established on the unhealthy little island of Ashurada, in the south-eastern Caspian. The Shah protested. The Russians replied that the occupation was necessary to enable them to check piracy. The struggle against the pirates and their hinterland lasted until well on into the 'eighties. And by that time the eastern shore of the Caspian was also in Russian hands.

In 1870, four years after the Caucasus had been finally subjugated, the brothers Siemens built the telegraph line Odessa-Tiflis-Tabriz-Teheran for Russia. Ten years later the brothers Nobel set up an oil industry in Baku. At the beginning of the twentieth century the Russian road to Tabriz was built, then the railway line from Tiflis to Tabriz was added, and in 1909 the part between Julfa and Tabriz was occupied—actually with the official assent of the English. The oil from Baku could only be applied to naval use if it could be brought to the Black Sea, so a railroad and oil pipe-line were built from Baku on the Caspian Sea to Batum. Now the isthmus was no longer merely the gate of access to Central Asia and the Near East, but also a very important raw materials base in case of war.

Nor was the Ottoman kingdom, though it had been weakened, altogether inactive during this time. It no longer, it is true, made wars. But it quite quietly occupied all the most important mountain passes, especially in the region of Lake Urmia. On the other hand, Turkish freedom of movement even in purely Turkish districts had been considerably restricted. For the

Russians, who had only conquered the piece of Armenia containing Kars and Batum in 1878, forbade the Turks to build a railway in that frontier district.

At the outbreak of the War, therefore, the Russians were strategically superior and they at once made use of their position to advance farther into Persia. Nevertheless the Turks were highly successful at first, both in the north, where they advanced on Kars, and in the east, where they occupied Khoi and Tabriz. The Kurds in 'neutral' Persia fought on the Turkish side and proved to be better fighters than their opponents the Armenians and Assyrians. In 1915, however, the lack of munitions and means of transport became acute on the Turkish side. The Russians regained the territory they had lost and advanced as far as Erzerum and Trebizond in Turkey, and to Hamadan, Kermanshah, and Isfahan in Persia.

This condition of things prevailed until the Russian revolution in 1917. Now a state of confusion and guerrilla warfare began in north Persia and in the Caucasus that puts all other scenes of irregular warfare in the shade. Two Russian generals remained there with a part of their men and continued to work for the Allies. The English hastily dispatched the Dunsterville Mission, and Dunsterville twice attempted an advance on the Caspian with his Persian and Armenian recruits. Then a Persian nationalist leader named Kutchik Khan arose in the mountains between Teheran and the Caspian. He had hated the Russians for their encroachments before the War, but he hated the English even more than the Russians. In the Caucasus Mountains Wrangel and Denikin were organizing their war against the Soviets. No particularly successful actions took place, considered from a purely military standpoint, until the Turks took the oil city of Baku in September 1918 with the help of the Germans. It was a short-lived victory. With the armistice the Turks retired and for the time being the English were left in sole possession. States—Armenia and Georgia—rose and fell. Then came the 'Central Caspian Dictatorship' in Baku. Then the Tartar republic of Azerbaijan. This was occupied by the Bolsheviks in the spring of 1920, as was also Georgia. The northern corner of Armenia went to the Soviets, the southern part to the Turks. Russians and Turks were now on terms of friend-

ship, for both were fighting for their existence against the Allies.

While the Russians went back to the former Russian portion of Azerbaijan, the English occupied the Persian part. The Dunsterville Mission had meanwhile been succeeded by regular troops. The Bolsheviks secured their position in the fertile provinces of Gilan and Mazenderan on the shores of the Caspian. This was the position in 1921. Then arose Iran's strong man—Rheza Khan. He marched on Teheran. He took over the government. In face of his resoluteness, foreign troops left the country. The pre-War boundaries were re-established in the north—for, after all, Persia had been neutral throughout the War.

It is even harder to discover what is happening to-day in these stretches of country than to find out what is going on in the Persian Gulf. Though the English are reluctant to grant permission to enter, once a permit has been given the traveller is free to go where he likes and to see what he will. In the frontier districts between Iran, Turkey, and Soviet Russia, on the other hand, a state of universal suspicion prevails. Military defences on land are, of course, fixed in one place and therefore more difficult to conceal than the more mobile air and sea defences.

The Turks are always pleasant and courteous. But twenty miles before Erzerum and ten miles beyond it is a military zone. A policeman enters the car of every foreigner passing through to make sure that he does not stray to right or left of the road. It is very difficult to obtain a permit to go to Lake Van, which has a special attraction for archaeologists. Even if it is granted, a particular route must be followed. At the Iranian frontier station of Khoi there is a threefold police inspection. Very few foreigners have as yet come to these parts. No doubt travellers in the Soviet Union are treated variously according to their nationality, as are goods that pass through.

Hence instead of certain information there are only rumours. Rumours in the East are deservedly suspect. There are whispers that oil has been struck. It is said that the Russians are developing an intensive secret communistic propaganda in the northern provinces. It is even said that it is only out of consideration for England that the Soviets have not tried to raise the standard of revolution.

One thing at all events is certain. Since the early days of the revolution, Soviet foreign policy has been radically changed. Originally the cry was for immediate world revolution. For this purpose it was necessary to show communism from its most attractive angle. Moscow voluntarily abandoned pre-War imperialist Russian concessions. Meanwhile, however, hope of a general world revolution has vanished and the Soviets have turned into an egoistic nationalist State. Their politics show a remarkable similarity with those of Tsarist days, except that propaganda has been added to commercial penetration and a possibly even more unscrupulous system of intrigue against other Powers. It is therefore not surprising that mistrust of Moscow is just as great to-day as it was once of St. Petersburg.

Officially the Turks and the Soviets are friends. But the Turkish Maginot line at Erzerum can be directed against one enemy only—Russia.

Until 1930 small frontier skirmishes occurred between Turkey and Iran. Since then the two States have got on to better terms, and in 1934 the Shah confirmed the new friendship by a visit to Kemal Ataturk in Istanbul. It was generally assumed that he would have the choice of two routes for this trip—one through Iraq and Syria, the other by rail from Tabriz through Julfa, Tiflis and Batum to the Black Sea, that is to say across Soviet Russian territory. Actually he took neither. He elected to go along the old caravan route that leads direct to Turkey without touching the territory of any other Power. 'Independence' has always been his watchword, and it was the reason for his unexpected choice of route.

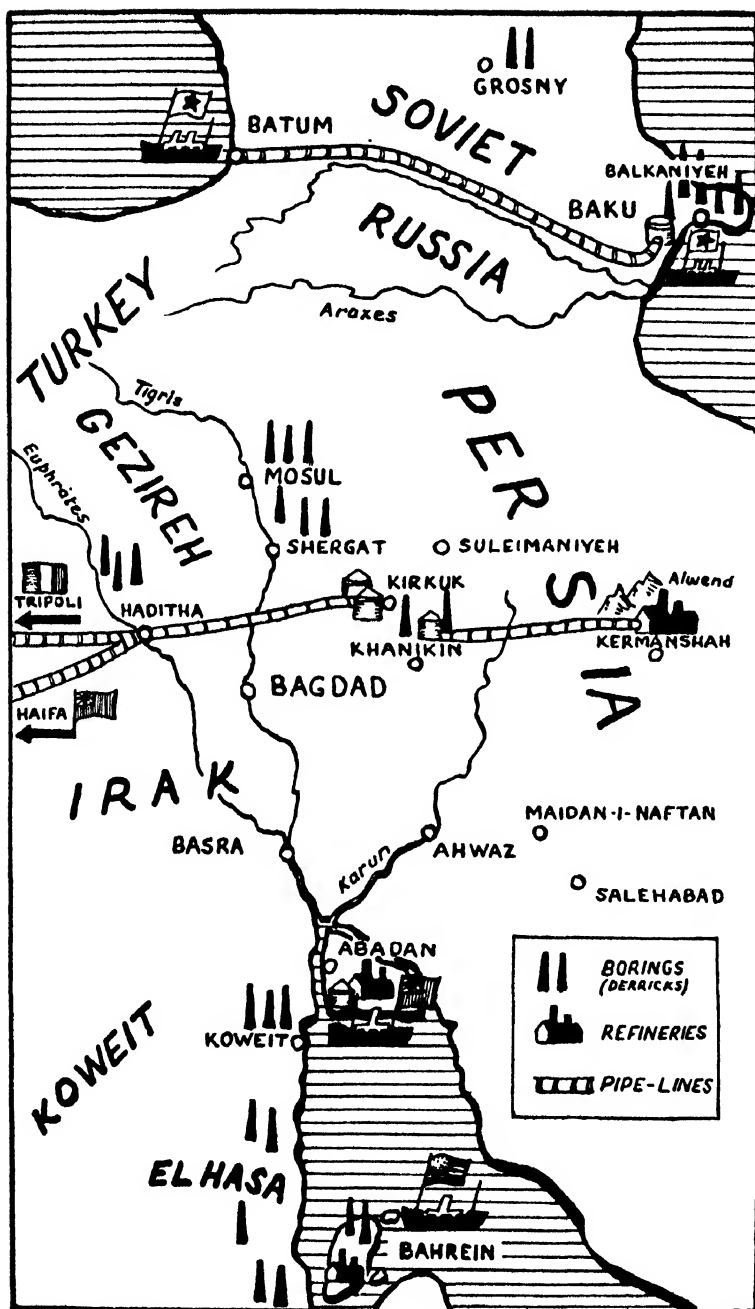
A thousand miles of camel track cannot be brought up to modern road standards within a few weeks. But preparations were entered upon feverishly for the great expedition. Holes were filled up with stones, earth, and sand. And in the end the road was passable. The Shah's journey was like a triumphal procession. It was a signpost for the political and commercial future that has been planned for Iran on the way to complete independence of its northern neighbour whose weight presses so heavily upon the Iranian State from the high mountains of the Caucasus.

## OIL

Any one sailing down the Shatt-el-Arab from Basra to the Persian Gulf to-day may have two quite distinct experiences. If he travels by night, he will first of all see a glow on the horizon, like the reflection of a huge fire. The glow comes nearer and grows smaller, and it will not always appear to be in the same place, for the waters of the Shatt-el-Arab wind in great curves on their way to the sea. At last the glow disappears and turns into an actual vast brilliant fire overhung by heavy red-glowing clouds of smoke. Beside, above, below the fire thousands of bright lights are twinkling, and in front of the fire are black chimneys and high black cubes and black open-work shapes. The whole is the town of Abadan, the town that contains the great refinery of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. The fires are the useless gases which have been set alight and are thus dispersed into the air. Sentries on towers keep a continual watch in order to observe if a spark lights on anything and causes a fire. The whole population of Abadan is trained in fire-fighting. Part of the population is at work all through the night. 'For', says one of the Gulf men leaning over the ship's railing, 'there is one thing about oil—it never stops.' The ship sails close by the quays of Abadan. Every now and then a breath of air laden with smoke and the smell of tar sweeps across. The general impression, despite the friendly twinkling of the lights and the dark gardens along the shores, is of a gigantic, well-organized hell.

In the day-time the scene is quite different. The fires, though still burning, are invisible in the fierce light of the Gulf sun. A black cloud of smoke rises from a hundred and fifty black chimneys. Between the chimneys are tall steel shapes with gleaming twisted tubes like silver serpents against the sky. And amidst them all are administrative offices and auxiliary railways and cranes. At the edge of the town innumerable rows of glistening aluminium-coloured tanks are drawn up like lines of soldiers. Between them and the tall buildings of the refinery is the native quarter. And in the north, where least smoke and fumes come are gardens, houses, clubs, and sports grounds, the dwellings





of the managers, of the engineers, of the British employees.

There can hardly be a steamer on the Shatt-el-Arab upon which there is not at least one oil engineer or other employee as passenger. They point out the towers they have built, the bungalows they have lived in, they count the numbers of Admiralty tankers lying at the thirteen piers. They tell of the monotony of the life in spite of all the amusements provided for them. Every cigar they buy is supplied by the company, every book they read, every film they see. Every man they know belongs to the company, and every conversation that they hold is concerned with it. Over and above the heavy damp sticky heat of the Gulf is the additional heat and oppression of the fire, of the oil fumes, of the smells of tar and sulphur. None the less some return after their contracts have expired. The Gulf has a fascination for many people.

Thirty years ago not a house of the great city of Abadan was standing. It was a flat alluvial island, like many to be found on the Shatt-el-Arab and the head of the Gulf, probably very much like the alluvial land on which the old Sumerians built their first reed huts.

The first impetus to the building of this blazing, silvery-black town was given by a man named William Knox d'Arcy. He was born in England, emigrated to Australia at an early age, and became a well-known lawyer in the town of Rockhampton. One day some friends came to show him some glittering stones. Two brothers of the name of Morgan had found them on a black, lonely mountain. The glittering points were gold. The brothers Morgan, D'Arcy, and their friends Hall and Pattison joined forces and made a syndicate. They bought the black mountain, with immense labour conveyed machinery to the mountain, and produced gold. Nearly half of the enterprise was D'Arcy's, and when he had made a handsome fortune out of it he retired to England.

Now another man of the name of Morgan comes into the story. This was the well-known French archaeologist de Morgan, who was excavating at Susa, the ancient capital of the Elamites. Archaeologists always know a little geology, so that they may be able to say that the stone of which the stairway in a royal palace is made came from the Caucasus; or that the pillars of

a temple were hewn from the hills of Lebanon. De Morgan, having such knowledge, realized that there must be oil somewhere along the Perso-Turkish frontier. He approached Monsieur Cotte, who had once been secretary to Baron Reuter and who knew therefore how concessions were to be obtained in Persia. A third joined them, a Persian named Kitabki. They realized that the first essential was money. They had heard of the rich Mr. D'Arcy. They enlisted his interest, he financed them and from that time on managed the whole affair. In 1901, D'Arcy was given a sixty-six year concession for the oil throughout Persia with the exception of the five northern provinces, that is to say the provinces that came within the Russian sphere of influence. A geologist was sent out and work was begun in Chiah Surkh, a few miles north of Khanikin close by the Perso-Turkish frontier.

It was almost more difficult to take the drilling apparatus to Chiah Surkh than it had been to transport the gold-mining machinery in Australia. It was easy enough as far as Baghdad, for it went by boat. But there it stopped. There was as yet no Baghdad Railway, and motor-cars were still unknown. Frontier officials caused delays. Later, the work of drilling proved immensely difficult. The heat amidst the brownish, crumbling, desert hills was intense. There was no coal for heating the engines, so that wood had to be brought to that treeless land. In the summer of 1903 a swarm of locusts appeared, lighted on the reservoirs and canals and poisoned the water. Small-pox broke out in a neighbouring village. The most important tribal chief of the district died of a stroke, and the oil-diggers were obliged to provide twenty sheep for the funeral feast although they themselves were already short of meat.

Meantime two drills were eating their way into the ground—three hundred, five hundred, seven hundred yards down. Oil began to flow. Instead of wood, therefore, oil could now be used. Plans were already under consideration for a pipe-line. The direct way would be through Mesopotamia. But the Turks were not friendly disposed, as had already been manifest over the transport of the drilling tools. To take the oil across the Iranian mountains would be enormously costly. While these matters were still under discussion the oil died down to a mere trickle, sometimes it stopped altogether.

The money from the golden mountain of Australia came to an end. Mr. D'Arcy gave the Burmah Oil Company a share in the undertaking. Chiah Surkh was abandoned. The next places to be tried were Shardin and Mamatain. Even less oil came to light here than at the first undertaking. One last attempt was determined upon at a place known to the natives to contain oil. From Ahwaz, the town on the Karun to which Messrs. Lynch had run their shipping line, a kind of road was with the greatest difficulty built leading into the mountains, to Maidan-i-Naftun. The tribal chiefs were won over. But there was no more money. From London, so the story goes, came the order to cease work. But the men on the spot set their teeth and went on drilling. Two days later, on 26th June 1908, oil welled up in great quantities. In the spring of 1909 the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (now the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company) was formed, with D'Arcy as managing director. Even before the War the British Admiralty owned the majority of the shares—good stories are told of how they obtained them—and during the War there was a grim struggle for the command of the pipe-line. Such was the beginning of the gigantic enterprise from which the towns of Abadan, Ahwaz, and Salehabad have arisen.

After the War everything seemed to be going well. Certainly the establishment of a strong State authority at Tcheran was not altogether pleasing to the little oil State in the south; nor was the wish of the Shah to appoint an auditor to supervise his oil percentages. However, everything apparently went on peacefully until in November 1932 the Shah cancelled the oil concession. The first reason given was that the Persian Government 'could not legally and logically feel itself bound by the terms of a concession that was made before the institution of the Constitutional régime, as well as in consideration of the circumstances in which the concession was in its day obtained and granted'. A fortnight later further reasons were alleged—that the concession had been acquired under pressure, that the percentages due to the Persian State had been falsely calculated, that the oil-fields had not been fully exploited.

The British Government, needless to say, was most unpleasantly jarred. England had given up all its other pre-War prerogatives in Persia. But oil was a vital matter for the empire.

It was pointed out that the Shah's Government had hitherto recognized the concession as legally existing; and further, that quite apart from any percentages, the company brought money into the country to the value of two million pounds every year in salaries and the consumption of goods; and that it had established a model community with schools and hospitals.

The dispute came before the League of Nations. The concession was adjudged to be legally binding for another thirty years. But the company had to pay a sum of money down, and twenty per cent annually, instead of the previous sixteen per cent of the net profits. It was obliged to agree to train and employ a larger percentage of Persians in the company. And—and this was probably the most afflicting point—it was obliged before the end of 1938 to choose from the original concession-district, which comprised the whole of southern Persia, a hundred thousand square miles to be the actual field of the concession, while the rest was to be left free thereafter for Persian enterprise.

Since then everything has gone on quietly again. In 1935 it was decided to enlarge the capacity of the refineries in Abadan from a hundred and sixty thousand barrels a day to two hundred and twenty-five thousand barrels a day. Branches were established; a refinery on the edge of Kermanshah on the old main road from Baghdad to Hamadan and Teheran. From here the north-west was supplied with petrol, and the great tank lorries of the company are the most frequent vehicles that the traveller meets. They bear the letters B.P. One party says this stands for 'British Petrol'; the other that it means 'Benzine Perse'. So every one is pleased. The Kermanshah refinery obtains its oil through a gleaming silver pipe-line across the mountains from the second branch establishment, the Khanikin Oil Company. This has been set up not far from the place where D'Arcy first drilled, at Alwend, a part that still belonged to Persia round about the year 1900, but that in consequence of a rectification of the frontier before the War was made over to Turkey and therefore now belongs to Iraq, but which is still regarded as part of the Anglo-Persian concession. This is a good example of how an oil 'State' keeps its own boundaries even though treaties may have changed the frontiers of the sovereign territorial States.

The English avoid anything that might cause friction. On the occasion of the Shah's visit to the Shatt-el-Arab district they went so far as hastily to remove all English notices in the streets of Mohammerah and Abadan, advertisements of soap and cinemas as well as traffic instructions. Within forty-eight hours they had all been replaced by Iranian words in Iranian writing—all of which proved to be labour lost, for His Majesty took a different route.

The famous Alfred Nobel, the inventor of dynamite and founder of the Nobel Prize, had three brothers. The youngest was blown up by an experiment with explosives carried on under the ægis of his father. The other two lived and worked in Russia in the 'sixties of last century. One of them manufactured lamps, the other guns. The lamp manufacturer was interested in petroleum. He sent for twelve barrels of it from abroad. As it was very dirty, he had it purified and made practicable for lamps. The other brother needed good hard wood for the stocks of his guns. He sent his lamp-making brother Robert, who evidently had less to do, to the Caucasus to obtain such wood. On the way Robert passed through Baku. There he found petroleum. Not that he discovered it; it had been known from olden times, for it seeped through the ground. Even the Abbassids had taxed the oil of Baku. But the Russian petroleum industry, that had enjoyed something of a boom at the beginning of the nineteenth century, had meanwhile collapsed again entirely.

It was as a result of Robert Nobel's trip to the Caucasus to buy timber that the whole vast oil industry of Baku came into being. The gun-maker and the lamp-maker joined forces and the dynamite brother in Sweden subscribed when they wished to extend the works or to counteract American competition.

Work at Baku was not much easier than in Persia. The oil-field of Balkhani that Robert chose to work was not on the sea coast. So he built a pipe-line. This was thirty years before D'Arcy began in Persia. The oil distributors who had hitherto transported oil in two-wheeled carts went on strike. In those days strikes were apt to turn into shooting affrays. Robert built a fleet of tankers for the Caspian Sea, because the Caucasus

was believed to be impossible to negotiate. There was no pipeline, no railway from Baku to Batum. The Volga, the means of transport for petroleum into the interior of Russia, freezes for five months during the winter. Robert therefore built storehouses. For he argued that lamp oil would be required more especially in winter. While Robert, originally a lamp manufacturer, was the business organizer, Louis, the maker of guns, became the social organizer. He saw to it that the work-people had proper housing; he arranged for them to invest their savings in oil shares if they wished; and they received a part of the profits. Children under twelve years of age were not allowed to work. A public library was built and named Villa Petrolia. These were unprecedented innovations in the 'eighties—even more unprecedented in Russia than in the rest of Europe.

But the Americans who had hitherto controlled the Russian market obstructed the Nobel enterprise. The English too were anti-Russian, and therefore anti-Nobel, at the end of the nineteenth century. In the face of this hostility an attempt to raise a loan in London failed. Bismarck took the opportunity to do the Russians a service and arranged with the German Banks to grant a loan. As the years went on more foreign capital—both French and English, and above all of the Koninklijke Shell under the control of the energetic Sir Henry Deterding—found its way to Baku.

The struggle for the Caucasus during the War took place on account of the oil. After the Soviets had taken Baku from the White Russians and the English, they nationalized all the oil-fields. That is to say, they dispossessed foreign concessionaires. Foreigners, oil magnates as well as statesmen, did not believe that the Soviet régime would last. Hence a struggle now began for the oil shares such as had previously raged over the Caucasus and Baku. Deterding had bought shares in the Nobel Company. Standard Oil bought the Russian emigrants' shares—and among the emigrants was the Nobel family.

The Genoa Conference of 1922 was the scene of the first diplomatic contest between the Soviets and the oil Powers. The English and Americans had not yet come to an agreement. Deterding was anxious at all costs to keep out the Standard Oil, so he discriminated between old shareholders and new share-

holders. As a result of this variance, Litvinoff won the first round. The Hague Conference again produced no result. Deterding proclaimed an oil boycott against Russia: 'If you buy Soviet oil you are buying stolen property,' was his slogan. For a time the rest kept to the agreement; then they found that the desire to do business and to take advantage of the cheapness of the Soviet oil weighed more heavily. And so Baku petroleum was once more received into the community of oil nations, though perhaps still as something of an outsider. American engineers helped to extend and to modernize the industry in Baku, Grosny, and Maikop. In 1933 Russia came immediately after the United States as second among the oil producers of the world.

The day before the murder of Serajevo, 27th June 1914, saw the birth of a company calling itself the Turkish Petroleum Company. A minority of the shares was in German hands, the majority in English. The purpose of the company was the exploitation of the oil-fields in northern Mesopotamia, in the Mosul district. It had been known from very early days that tar and oil were to be found there. The Babylonians used pitch instead of mortar to bind their bricks into walls, the Sumerians built the round boats they used on the Tigris of palm branches and pitch. In all sorts of places round Mosul and Shergat and Suleimaniyeh dirty blackish-green patches were to be seen on the ground where the oily mass had oozed through from the interior of the earth.

The Turkish Petroleum Company was short-lived. During the War Mosul was first in Turko-German and afterwards in English hands. In their Agreement of 1916 Sykes and Picot arranged that the vilayet of Mosul should go to France. It is to be presumed that Sir Henry Deterding's opinion was not asked. In 1918, however, British oil magnates explained to the Government how their own and Great Britain's interests were concerned, and Lloyd George was given a promise by Clémenteau that consideration should be given to English rights, provided that the French should receive the same number of oil shares that the Germans had once possessed. In 1920 Sir John Cadman, successor to D'Arcy in the Anglo-Persian Oil Com-



pany, and Philippe Berthelot concluded an agreement at San Remo in which the Mosul oil question was settled to the sole advantage of France and England. The Americans were furious. They clamoured for the 'open door', and refused to be pacified until Sir John Cadman fulfilled their requirements in the course of a tour in the United States.

The negotiations and agreements of 1919 and 1920, however, were concerned with a district the political ownership of which had not yet been settled. The Turks to whom Mosul, together with the whole of Mesopotamia, had once belonged, refused to sign the Treaty of Sèvres that had been designed for them and went on fighting. In the subsequent struggle the unity of the erstwhile allies, France and England, collapsed. Franklin-Bouillon made a separate treaty with Turkey on behalf of France. England, with Greece, remained *the* enemy to Turkey. There was friction and mistrust between France and England over Near Eastern matters. London could not reckon on any help from Paris in the Mosul question.

This was the situation in January and February 1923, when the Lausanne Conference took place at which a new peace treaty for Turkey was worked out. The last point to be dealt with was the Mosul question. The British nation was tired of war. The English Press demanded that Mosul should be handed over to the League of Nations. 'Mosul is not worth the bones of a single British soldier,' said the *Daily Express*. Bonar Law, the Prime Minister, continually reiterated that there must be no war on account of Mosul. But the English Foreign Secretary who was negotiating with the Turks at Lausanne was none other than Lord Curzon, late Viceroy of India. It was he who had in his time made the visit of demonstration with the fleet in the Persian Gulf. He had attacked the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907 because it did not take sufficient account of British interests. He had travelled all over Hither Asia and had written the best book extant on Persia. He was determined to guard the empire interests that lay on the road to India even in defiance of his war-weary people, and in defiance of his Prime Minister who was inclined to give way.

Article I of the Turkish national pact of 19th January 1920, upon which the new Turkish State was founded, contains a

resolution on the subject of the 'independence and indivisibility of the territory of the Ottoman Empire, in so far as it was not occupied by the enemy at the conclusion of the Armistice of Mudros (30th October 1918)'. According to this Mosul was part of the inalienable territory, since its occupation by British troops had only taken place after the conclusion of the Mudros agreement.

Lord Curzon did not enter into the question of the legitimacy of the subsequent occupation, but said with a frankness that seems strange to-day what he thought of the Turkish pact on the one hand, and of the rights of the victor on the other:

The Turkish Delegation come here and seriously contend that the British Government should hand back a considerable portion of the area which it thus conquered and which it has since administered, merely because the Turkish Parliament in Constantinople in February 1920 came to certain resolutions which have been called the National Pact and which have since been confirmed by the Grand National Assembly at Angora. I venture to say that such an argument has never before been addressed to a nation or government which has been victorious in battle. . . . Ismet Pasha said that it was contrary to the modern spirit to conquer anybody. Is that the spirit in which the Turkish Government are going, in future, to conduct their affairs?<sup>1</sup>

Since Woodrow Wilson's points concerning the right to self-determination of the peoples were still supposed to hold good as the foundation for the new apportionment of the world, the Kurds theoretically played the chief part in the Mosul question. They formed the majority of Mosul's population of eight hundred thousand. Besides five hundred thousand Kurds there were a hundred and seventy thousand Arabs, and the rest were Assyrians, Yezidi, Jews, and Turks. What did the Kurds want? With a fine irony Harold Nicolson says: 'The Kurds, again, who, when we wanted them to feel race-conscious, had refused to manifest any such desire, had suddenly awoken to the Fourteen Points in 1922—a most belated moment.'<sup>2</sup> Thus the Kurds wished to be joined to Turkey chiefly because they did not want to be a minority in an Arab nationalist State.

<sup>1</sup> Harold Nicolson: *Curzon: the Last Phase*, p. 335.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 329.

Ismet Pasha (now Ismet Inonu) in putting the Turkish point of view made the mistake of declaring that the Kurds were Turks, which gave Lord Curzon the opportunity to say:

It was reserved for the Turkish delegation to discover for the first time in history that the Kurds were Turks. Nobody has ever found it out before. . . . It is a matter of general agreement that the Kurds are of Iranian race. They speak an Iranian language; their features are entirely different from those of the Turks, and so are their customs and their relations with women. I have been in the Kurdish country myself. I have stayed with the Kurds, and though I do not pretend to be an authority I would undertake to pick out a Kurd from a Turk any day of the week. Unless I were blind, I could not confuse the two.<sup>1</sup>

The Turks suggested a plebiscite, in accordance with modern international custom. But Lord Curzon thought nothing of plebiscites. He quoted as examples the plebiscites of Teschen and Upper Silesia:

Let us imagine a plebiscite in Kurdistan, he said. What would happen? The population is always moving. The majority is illiterate and will not know how to vote. . . . The Kurds would doubtless vote for an independent Kurdistan; the Arabs for an Arab State; the Turks for Turkish nationality; and the Christians for anything which will keep them away from the Turks. How can you define frontiers under such conditions?<sup>2</sup>

The Mosul question remained as an important unsolved problem at the Lausanne Conference. Lord Curzon thereby did his country an invaluable service in a most difficult situation. He refused to surrender at a time when Britain was weary and indifferent. He manoeuvred the Turks into the position of being treaty-breakers—in case they should at some later date after the conclusion of the Treaty of Lausanne wish to make the Mosul question a *casus belli*. He prepared the way for handing over the dispute to the League of Nations and thus for a settlement in favour of the British.

Later events pursued the following course. First there was an inconclusive conference between Sir Percy Cox and the Turkish delegate Fethi Bey. The dispute was brought before the League

<sup>1</sup> Harold Nicolson: *Curzon: the Last Phase*, p. 336.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 339.

of Nations. A commission under Count Paul Teleki acted as *rapporteur*. The Council gave its ruling. The Turks refused to accept the ruling. In 1925 the question came before the Hague Court. Its verdict was that Turkey could not repudiate the finding of the League of Nations. In June 1926 a treaty was made between England, Iraq, and Turkey, according to which the whole Mosul district was awarded to Iraq. One of the peculiarities of the case was that Lord Curzon, while as English Foreign Secretary he was acting in the interests of the British oil industry, was also fighting as trustee for the State of Iraq.

The Turkish demands were rejected, and the American demands agreed to. The Turkish Petroleum Company turned into the Iraq Petroleum Company, which represented the following groups:

	per cent
Anglo-Iranian Oil Company	23·5
Koninklijke Shell	23·5
Compagnie Française des Pétroles	23·5
Near East Development Company	23·5
(i.e. Standard Oil and Socony Vacuum)	
Calouste Sarkis Gulbenkian, an Armenian	5·0

One quarter French, one quarter American, two quarters English; and as pointer on the scales a man of whom no one knew very much beyond the fact that he was alternately an ally and an opponent of Deterding's.

A year after the conclusion of the treaty boring was begun. The company's concession was in the land to the east of the Tigris. Oil flowed freely. For eight years engineers worked in the desert, guarded by aircraft and mechanized troops. A double pipe-line was constructed, one part leading to Tripoli in French mandated territory, the other to Haifa in English mandated territory. This added an English and French oil-supply in the Mediterranean to the English supply in the Persian Gulf and the Soviet Russian supply in the Caspian and Black Sea. Iraq, the landlord, had granted the concession for seventy-five years. It drew a percentage of the profits. In 1936 it decided to build a refinery for its own requirements.

The Iraq Petroleum Company, however, was not the only competitor in the field. It had a rival in the shape of Mosul

Oil-Fields, Ltd., which had acquired a seventy-five years' concession on the western side of the Tigris. One of the leading men in this concern was John Rickett who achieved short-lived fame at the time of the Abyssinian crisis by buying an oil concession in Abyssinia from the Negus. Originally eight nations were engaged in the Mosul Oil-Fields—Germany with the Deutsche Treuhand A. G. (for Otto Wolff, Mannesmann Röhrenwerke, Gutehoffnungshütte, Vereinigte Stahlwerke); England with Rickett and a number of private persons; France with Paul Girod; Italy with the Azienda Generale Italiana Petroli; Iraq with Daud al Haidari; the Netherlands with Ferrostaal (that was commonly believed to be a German firm); Switzerland with several Banks; and a certain proportion the owner of which was unknown.

It is to be supposed that the British Government having secured empire interests by sharing in the Iraq Petroleum Company inclined to the opinion that Iraq might adopt the principle of the open door as regards the rest. However, it soon changed its mind. In the autumn of 1935, after the beginning of the Abyssinian crisis, the Press reported that the Italian share in the Mosul Oil-Fields had been greatly increased, some even hinted at an Italian majority. At all events the company's Board was reconstituted. A certain number of Englishmen retired and their place was taken by Italians. Thereby, it was said, Italy had command of oil-fields the yield of which could be taken to the Mediterranean.

Although it is difficult to see how, in case of an Anglo-Italian conflict, the Italians would get oil from Mosul to the Mediterranean without touching French or English territory, the increase of Italian influence in Iraq's second oil company does seem to have given London a shock. It is not known exactly what steps were taken. The result, at all events, was that in the summer of 1936 the six Italian representatives on the Board of the Mosul Oil Company retired, as also did one German, and that three of the new British directors belonged to subsidiary groups of the Iraq Petroleum Company. Thereby, so it was generally assumed, the Iraq Petroleum Company had also acquired control of the Mosul Oil-Fields.

Hitherto definite concessions and ownerships, working refineries and pipe-lines, have been discussed. Amidst all this lie vast contested districts, under a thick fog of secrets, rumours, false information. National and purely commercial interests sometimes work in alliance and sometimes against one another; and it is not yet clear either where new oil industries will come into being or in whose hands they will lie.

There is the huge district between the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in southern Iran and the Baku industry in the north. It is believed to contain oil. Before the War the northern provinces were recognized as a Russian sphere of influence. A Russian named Khostaria had a concession for the north. After the Russian revolution he sold it to the Anglo-Persian Oil Company. There was an outcry throughout the country. Persia concluded an agreement with Soviet Russia whereby no concession might be granted in north Persia without the concurrence of the Moscow Government. The Anglo-Persian had its trouble for nothing.

In 1920 feeling in America was very strong against England over the matter of oil, especially in regard to Mosul oil and the Treaty of San Remo referred to above. Furthermore, America had a sudden fear lest its own oil wells should run dry. A number of schemes were started in oil politics and it was suggested to one of the oil concerns that it should apply for the north Persian oil-fields. A fresh storm of indignation broke out, this time both on the part of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company and of the Soviet Government. Sir John Cadman went to the United States. The English and Americans came to terms on the northern Iran question among others. But all in vain. 'All proposals on the subject of concessions in northern Persia emanating from independent companies were first submitted by Shah Rheza for the approval of the Soviet Government.' (Nauwelaerts.)

In the spring of 1937 Iranian papers announced the granting of a sixty years' concession to an American company calling itself the Amiranian Oil Company, a subsidiary company of the Standard Oil. This company was given three years within which to prospect and to select a site of a hundred thousand square miles. The financial conditions were similar to those of

the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. One fifth of any net profits exceeding a five per cent dividend and a charge on every ton of crude oil transported were to be paid to the Teheran Government. With this concession Iran was divided into three as regards oil—the Anglo-Iranian in the south-west, the Amiranian in the north-east, and Soviet Russia in the north-west.

Rumours were now rife. It was said that rich oil-wells had been struck in the Soviet Russian sector, but that they would not be exploited as the Soviets did not wish to compete with their own industry at Baku, and that their only interest in the matter lay in preventing others from boring. Secondly, it was said that American prospecting had been very successful; that several shiploads of boring instruments were on the way and that work would be begun immediately. Amidst all the rumours an occasional fact would make its appearance. In July 1938 the Americans withdrew from their concession. What had happened? The answer to the question produced a fresh crop of rumours. The most credible one sought to explain it by saying that it was not caused by any Irano-American dispute but that their unpleasant experience in Mexico had robbed the Americans of any desire to make further experiments in nationalistically-minded States. At all events, for the time being, the English and the Russians alone remain in Iranian territory.

Bahrein oil has already been discussed in the section on the Persian Gulf. It forms the central point, and at present almost the only fixed point in the great newly discovered oil field on the Arabian side of the Persian Gulf. Everything is still in a state of flux on the mainland. Politically the territory is in various hands. The coastal province of El Hasa is ibn Saud's. South of this are independent or semi-independent sheikhs. In the north is Koweit, which may almost be regarded as British territory. Geologists are taking secret journeys with their instruments all over the deserts and the salt lakes. New names are invented for commercial enterprises—Hedjas Development Corporation, Saudi Arabian Syndicate, Ltd., Koweit Oil Company, Oil Concessions, Ltd. Only the initiated know to which of the large groups or amalgamation of groups each belongs. The Iraq Petroleum Company and the Anglo-Iranian at all events are concerned in every quarter. In so far as anything can be

regarded as definite at present it may be said that the American sphere lies along the middle of the coastal district, opposite to Bahrein, and the English come north and south of this. The French have also found entry in the part controlled by the Iraq Petroleum Company as parent company.

The most recently discovered oil-field is the stretch of country between Mosul and the Mediterranean. Here the atmosphere of secrecy is the most dense, perhaps because it is easier for inquisitive strangers to gain access to this part than to the Arabian mainland and northern Iran. Possibly also because political interests meet here most closely—the Republic of Lebanon, the Republic of Syria, France as mandatory Power over both, and their neighbour, Turkey, which formerly ruled over the whole territory.

Williamson, a geologist who worked in Luristan, who worked for the I.P.C. on the Arabian mainland opposite Bahrein in the years 1937 and 1938, spent several years before that with a Swiss geologist in northern Syria. With suave courtesy and innocent blue eyes he turns any conversation that outsiders may try to start upon the subject of his findings. If one's information depended on him, one would believe that never a drop of oil apart from olive oil had been sighted in northern Syria. It is no doubt a fact, however, that in the Gesireh, the famous triangle of land between the Tigris and the Khabur, oil has been found. How much truth there is in the rumour that this 'sea of oil' reaches as far as the Mediterranean coast is not yet clear.

At all events France's views regarding the ratification of the treaty with Syria have suddenly changed since these oil finds have been made. Fresh negotiation proved to be 'necessary'. One of the chief points in these fresh negotiations concerned the oil concession in the north. Up to the present apparently no arrangement satisfactory to both parties has been suggested. But the riots that broke out in Syria in the spring of 1938 in the Gesireh, and which were the result mainly of differences between Armenians and Syrians, are said to have been basically a result of the oil problem. The aim of the French is to range this territory among those requiring special protection on account of their minorities even after the mandate shall have been



raised; in other words—maintenance of French influence over the newly discovered oil-fields.

Just as the discovery of new oil-fields may lead to international complications, so the failure to find oil may cause a struggle for power. It turned out that the frontiers of the new Turkey were so drawn that all the oil-fields remained outside them. All efforts to find oil within the boundaries have hitherto been vain. Turkey is surrounded by oil lands—Rumania on the European side, Soviet Russia in the Caucasus, Iran in Azerbaijan, Iraq in Mosul, Syria in the Gesireh. The two last-mentioned countries have only been separated from Turkey since the War. When Turkey began its efforts to regain the Sanjak of Alexandretta the English Press saw them as the beginning of an invasion of the Mosul oil-fields. Since oil has been found in the Gesireh it is more probable that a Turkish push—if it should take place—would be directed against this neighbouring territory of north Syria, the hinterland of the north Syrian town of Aleppo, which, on account of a considerable percentage of Turks among the population, has still preserved an inclination towards Turkey. Moreover, the French mandatory administration—in contradistinction to the British—has made no efforts to develop in the Syrian State a power of resistance internally or externally. The establishment of the autonomous republic of Hatay (Alexandretta) is the first piece of Syrian frontier territory to break away—this time with the concurrence of the French. It is by no means impossible that in the course of time other such defections may take place.

One characteristic of the Oil Sovereignties is that they are administered from abroad, with the exception of the Soviet Russian, despite the new era of nationalism in State life. This is an example of a pre-War system which has survived—though in an altered form—to come to full fruition in post-War times.

## V

### NEW STATES FOR OLD

*'Much has been accomplished, but our task is not yet done.'*

[KEMAL ATATURK]

THE World War was an end and a beginning in the Near East. The West was driven out; and then it was invited in again by another door. And finally, without asking permission, it established itself in a position of authority in a form that is a mixture of the old method of conquest with the later one of commercial imperialism and the latest one of protection—all under the name of the Mandatory System.

The World War destroyed the last composite State of the old type in Asia just as it did in Europe—Austria-Hungary in the latter, the Ottoman empire in the former. The two had always been hostile to one another and always very much alike. They ruled over their peoples with a unique mixture of tolerance and intolerance, of cruelty and indifference. They produced a curiously cosmopolitan caste of officials and the most polished of courtiers. In pre-War days both sought vainly to subdue the covert friction that went on between the different nationalities within their frontiers.

The collapse of the Ottoman empire, like that of Austria-Hungary, brought into being a number of Succession States. Contrary to what happened in Austria-Hungary, the collapse for the first time made it possible for the original ruling race in the Ottoman empire to take breath as it were and to concentrate its energies upon its own development in the new State of Turkey.

In comparison with this new State Iran is ancient. Its new form is not the result of its being engaged in war, nor of boundaries being drawn afresh, but of its having realized the weak-

ness of Europe after the War and taking advantage of that fact to free itself.

The two old States in their new form have one advantage in common as compared with the young Succession States. They have both found leaders to guide the destinies of their people with a sure hand. They are both desirous of learning modern technical achievements as quickly as possible in order to 'catch up' with Europe. Nevertheless, as a result of their very dissimilar historical backgrounds and as a consequence of the fundamentally different character of their rulers, the two have pursued a course of development that only very superficial observers could regard as similar.

The differences in the reconstruction of the various States are not without significance for their political principles and evolution. Iran has for a long time past been what it is now. Its frontiers have hardly changed in the last hundred years. It has only undergone an internal change. The Arabian Succession States, on the other hand, were created from without, to conform with ideas that were not concerned with their essential characteristics but with the interests of the Great Powers. Turkey, however, established itself of its own force against the will of the Great Powers. It is common to all, though to varying degrees, that they have restricted the influence of Islam upon the conduct of their State and their lives.

## TURKEY

The Ottoman empire produced a quite specific type of officer and civil servant, which may most readily be compared with that of Great Britain, though lacking in many of the Briton's qualities. It was the type of man who is much abroad—as Kai-makam in Antioch, as Vali in Baghdad, as leader of an army fighting insurrection in Yemen or in Albania; and once in a while, as a mark of disfavour, as District Commissioner in some isolated spot in the mountains. He knew the whole immense empire. Sometimes he was concerned only to cut a good figure in Constantinople, for ever keeping one eye on the powers that were at the Sultan's Court. Sometimes he did his best to rule well and to improve the territory confided to his care. Some-

times he sank into indifference and inaction, for the terrible hopelessness of his task paralysed his efforts.

Mustafa Kemal was such a man. He was not an administrative official but a soldier. He had moved about all over the empire. He knew Salonika and Istanbul, Anatolia and the Arabian parts. At times, owing to his great abilities he was regarded with favour by the authorities; at other times he was banished on account of his unruliness. He was not among those prepared to watch resignedly the dissolution of the empire. He wanted to do something to prevent it. This ruffled the indolence of the old Ottoman empire, and was considered to be revolutionary. It was therefore necessary to do it in secret. Mustafa Kemal became a conspirator. He left his military post secretly by night to meet his friends. But he was always a man apart. The others lived in the capitals of Europe and really cared very little about the well-being of Turkey itself. For this reason he was not one of the leaders after the Young Turk revolution of 1908 that deposed the last Sultan of the *ancien régime*, the jealous and avaricious Abdul Hamid. He was a forerunner. And he stood aloof.

During the War he learnt that his soldiers were just as good as the European. He got on badly with political and military authorities, for he distrusted their policy. He respected the abilities of the German generals with whom and under whom he fought. But he looked upon the entry of Turkey into the War on the German side as a mistake. His victories made him popular among the people. He was therefore sent away to distant battlefields. When the situation became too bad he was brought back again. A dangerous, insubordinate man. And one who walked by himself.

This was the condition of affairs at the end of the War. After the armistice the Allies' requirements of Turkey gradually filtered through:

Russia was to have had the north-east. This was not carried out on account of the Russian revolution. Instead, the republic of Armenia was created upon former Russian and Turkish soil, and the Greeks established a 'Greek Pontus Government' in the stretch of land along the Black Sea from Trebizond and Samsun to Batum, with the Greek sections of the population as its mainstay.

England claimed the Arabic districts from Palestine to the Persian Gulf, as also Aleppo and Damascus in the interior of Syria which had already been given to the Emir Feisal.

France demanded the whole of the Syrian coast from Palestine northwards, as well as Cicilia with Adana and Alexandretta, and as a 'sphere of influence' part of the interior of Anatolia as far as Diar Bekir and Siwas.

The vilayets Adalia and Konia had been adjudicated to Italy, and also a 'sphere of interest' in the west and north-west, behind Smyrna.

Greece claimed the whole rich coastal district of Smyrna, as well as the above-mentioned Pontus province.

In Constantinople the Allies dictated terms and the Sultan carried out their wishes. The English banished to Malta all outstanding personalities with nationalist ambitions. Mustafa Kemal was not among these. He played a lone hand and nobody really knew him. He was known as a general and not as a politician. He had communicated his plans only to a very small group. He succeeded, with the help of friends in the Ministry of War, in having himself ordered to Erzerum and Siwas for demobilization purposes. The Inter-Allied Commission agreed. Only after Mustafa Pasha was on a ship in the Black Sea did stories of his turbulent spirit come to their ears. The order was cancelled. Mustafa Kemal took no notice. He was well away. Nothing could stop him now. The idea of demobilization never entered his mind. He was only concerned to rally the weary Anatolian soldiers and peasants for a last effort.

What followed is well known. There was war on four fronts. In the north against the Armenians. The erstwhile Turkish territory was reconquered and in addition the parts round Kars that the Russians had secured in 1878. The Soviet Russians acquiesced. They were fighting against the whole world with their backs to the wall. They were delighted to see a man take up his weapons for the sake of his country. They sent him arms and munitions. In the south the Turks were engaged with the French. They fought in the Taurus, in Marash, Urfa, and Gazi Aintep. There were hardly any men left there by that time. So the women fought instead. In the west and north-west the Greeks had made a victorious ingress. They possessed the very latest weapons which had been released by the allies at the

conclusion of peace. They advanced almost to Angora. Then they were beaten at the River Sakaria, at Eskishehir, and Inonu, at Afyon-Karahissar.

Meanwhile the summer of 1922 had come. Peace had already been made with Armenia and the Soviets. The French had swiftly and silently agreed upon an armistice, and had thereupon sent their trusted emissary Monsieur Picot to Angora with Franklin-Bouillon in order to conclude peace. The Greeks were in full flight. The English were still occupying the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus. The situation in Mudania made them uneasy; they did not know what to do. An armistice was arranged.

Then came the peace conference of Lausanne. The way in which Curzon handled the Turks has already been told. Europe had not yet grown accustomed to the idea of accepting the new revolutionary State under the leadership of a 'robber chieftain'. Moreover, a representative had appeared from another doubtful and by no means recognized new State—Chicherin from Moscow. True, he was a Balt by descent and had the manners of a gentleman. He was not admitted to the actual conference. But he supported the resistance of the Turks and was most awkward over the Straits question.

Lord Curzon gradually came to appreciate his Turkish opponent Ismet Pasha (now Ismet Inonu after the victory of Inonu). The Turkish demands were fulfilled. Only four questions remained open—the Mosul question, which was settled in favour of the English by the League; the question of the Turkish-Syrian frontier, which ended in the agreement with Ponsot in 1927 and the reorganization of the Sanjak of Alexandretta on a basis of international law in 1938; the question of the Graeco-Turkish exchange of populations, which was completed by the year 1929; the question of the old Ottoman Debt, which was laid upon the Succession States as to sixty-two per cent—and for the rest treated on the same lines as other war debts.

This made the frontiers of the new State *conterminus* with the limits of its homogeneous population to the exclusion of all alien elements. But in the interior of the country everything was at sixes and sevens. The numerous wars of the Ottoman empire had drained it of its last resources. There were hardly any men left—they had fought in the Balkan Wars, they had fought

against Yemen, they had fought in the war in Tripoli, in the World War, and in the war of Turkish Liberation. Smyrna, the richest coastal town, and all its neighbourhood were laid waste almost entirely. The Greeks behaved like barbarians, the Turks took their revenge, the Armenians added to the general devastation, whole sections of the city were burnt. During the past centuries the Anatolian peasantry had developed only one faculty—an immense power of resistance to bad government, to oppression. As a result, they had a fundamental distrust of all authority.

Mustafa Kemal could not simply make decrees as he wished and as the needs of the country dictated. He was obliged to discuss every measure with his enemies and many of them with his friends. He did not, as Mussolini and Hitler did later, develop his Party machinery first and then seize power with the support of his Party. He was a solitary worker. Those who considered themselves to be statesmen thought he was the right man to liberate the country from the enemy but that he should leave the government of the country to others because that was not his business.

All these events did not take place in orderly succession—first war and, after the conclusion of peace, political settlement. The country had to be organized while war was still raging; it was necessary, during the course of the war, to establish relations with what was officially the only legitimate Turkish Government in Istanbul. The populace that was ready to fight for its right to self-determination must also be brought to manifest its will in internal affairs.

The dramatic episodes in which Mustafa Kemal made his way against his enemies, against his friends, against the Sultan and the Caliph, against the reactionaries, have often been told. In watching the vehement impetus of his career the solid work that he put in is often forgotten, though in the long run it will prove to be his greatest claim to fame.

Before the War and during the War Kemal Atatürk ascertained the following facts:

First. The foreign sections of the population in Turkey prevented the cohesion of the nation. In the mercantile centres

foreigners held the key-positions and thus prevented the Turks, who were inferior to them in commercial ability, from administering the country according to their own ideas.

Second. The fact that the seat of government was in Constantinople caused it to be subject to all the influences of that mighty, luxurious, epicurean city. This greatly diminished its power of resistance to European pressure.

Third. The people of Anatolia apparently existed only to be robbed by tax-gatherers, to shed their blood in foreign lands, to give up their ablest men to administer distant parts. It had the honour of being the eponymous population of the State and was for that very reason neglected, because it was the only race in the Ottoman empire that was 'safe'.

Fourth. The backwardness of the Turkish people in all matters of technique and modern acquirements necessarily meant that there were too many European enterprises in the country.

Fifth. The whole power that Islam wielded over the minds and the mode of life of the people was brought to bear by the clergy to prevent any innovations. Before such resistance all attempts to combat Turkish backwardness were bound to fail.

Sixth. Foreign loans and concessions had made foreigners the real masters of the country. Capitulations not only undermined the Turkish systems of administration, law, and economics, but also the personal self-confidence of the Turks.

It is upon this knowledge that the new organization of the Turkish State was founded.

The foreign sections of the population were eliminated from the country. The Turks in the ceded territories were brought back. This was a transaction of enormous magnitude, which has not been altogether completed even now. It has been a painful operation for both sides, especially where the two million Greeks were concerned. At first it involved serious economic losses for the Turks. They made the best of it. The first and sole matter of importance was to get rid of foreign influence. Even certain occupations were barred to foreigners as time went on, including quite humble occupations like photography, taxi-driving, hairdressing. This was aimed at the little Italian and Greek businesses that made a tenacious effort in many places to hold on.

How strong distrust of the Great Powers and their erstwhile



omnipotent Consuls was during the first few years is shown in an article by Harold Armstrong in the year 1928:

And a word of advice to any of you who may be doing business in Turkey—avoid the diplomats and the consuls. I am not saying anything against the diplomats or the consuls, but the Turkish Government are determined that they shall not obtain any of their old control or powers. For example, I visited a certain governor and, as he did not know I was coming, I walked into his office—the Governor's door is open to all applicants—and stood with arms folded until he should notice me. After I had stood waiting for a while, he looked up from his table where he was writing and seeing me asked me who I was and what I wanted. I told him. Whereupon he said: 'Have you the British Consul with you?' and when I said 'No', he replied at once: 'Come along then, we can get to business if you are acting for yourself.'

The instructions appear to be that all Turkish officials must treat foreign representatives with courtesy, but that they should take care that the consuls do not get back any of their old powers.<sup>1</sup>

No doubt this feeling has been overcome by now, but it shows an essential stage along the road to internal self-liberation, which was more important and harder to achieve even than the external.

The Caliphate was abolished. This was the step that met with the greatest opposition. It could not be carried out all at once. First the Sultanate was separated from the Caliphate and on 29th October 1923 the Turkish republic was proclaimed. In March 1924 the Caliph was deposed. He had in any case only led a shadow existence, like the last Abbassid Caliphs in Baghdad. The members of the House of Osman were exiled. Schools throughout the country were secularized. Questions of family law and the laws of marriage and inheritance were taken from the ecclesiastical jurisdiction and handed over to the temporal. For this purpose it was necessary to create a whole new code of civil law. It was modelled upon the Swiss code. Mercantile law was taken over from Italy.

Turkey no longer uses the Islamic chronology—the present year is called 1939 and not 1317 of the Hejira. The foreigner in Turkey does not find as he does in so many Arabic countries

<sup>1</sup> Journal of the Central Asian Society, Vol. XV, 1928, p. 426.

that half the week is a holiday—Friday for the Moslems, Saturday for the Jews, Sunday for the Christians. The latter were actually in a minority but occupied the most important commercial posts. There is one holiday only in Turkey now—Sunday. The faithful Moslem is at liberty to say his prayers at the mosque on Fridays as on any other day.

All this would have been so much beating of the air if Istanbul had remained the capital of the country. For Stambul cannot be changed. It is one of the few cities that are stronger than the people who inhabit them. It is one of the cities that moulds men, and always in the same fashion. Hence the decisive step was taken and Angora was made the capital. It is instructive to read what some one who evidently knew Turkey, even if he did not love it, wrote anonymously in *Foreign Affairs* in 1925:

More serious still is the growing disaffection of Constantinople and the Marmara region. Basically this is a question of lowlands versus highlands, of the divergence of interests between a coastal region, with its sea-borne trade, and a high and largely barren plateau. The highlands rule, and the erstwhile great city, the Seat of Empire for fifteen centuries, is consistently snubbed. Last summer, when Mustapha Kemal sailed up the Bosphorus on a warship, the Constantinopolitans enjoyed their nearest approach to a visit from their President. Presidential displeasure is hard to bear, no doubt, but the loss of trade is still worse. Anatolian administrators and Angoran legislation are pretty generally held responsible for the present serious slump in the commerce of Constantinople.

Since then the situation has changed greatly. Here and there people, especially Europeans and Europeanized inhabitants of Constantinople, may cavil at the steps taken by Angora. But the majority has been won over to Angora's side. The President used to pay long visits to the palace of Dolma Bagtshe in Stambul; his yacht lay in the Bosphorus, government business was carried on in the former capital during the summer; for Angora has grown so sure of itself that it need no longer fear the influence of Stambul.

The foreigner who decides against travelling in the excellent Turkish sleeping cars between Istanbul and Angora and goes by motor instead may have to endure certain hardships in the early

part of the year and in the late autumn—rivers will have to be forded which are dry in summer; half a day's rain is enough to turn the roads into a tenacious clay bog out of which a car cannot work its way by its own power. But all this will be as nothing to him when after a long drive through a vast, uninhabited, colourful, desolate mountain region—the latter part of the time over a good metalled road—he comes to the last pass, the pass between Ayash and Istanos, four thousand five hundred feet above sea-level. In the distance gleams a winding river, beyond it, far away, a mass of stone upon two eminences. Field-glasses confirm what the naked eye has faintly discerned—it is Angora, thirty-five miles distant, but clearly visible in the mountain air.

The city crowned with its castle looks very medieval in the distance. Nearer approach dispels this impression. Tall wireless masts stand up against the sky; aircraft are drawn up with military precision to the right of the road; there are offices, Banks, palatial hotels. At first the town seems perplexingly large to the newcomer, as it lies spread out over hills and valleys, with residential suburbs stretching to the horizon. A drive over the Dikmen, a hill south of the city, where poplars and whitethorn grow, will help to give him his bearings. The high castle hill with the old light-coloured Turkish houses is back again in the centre of the picture, like a grizzled watchman guarding the spreading city and its rectangular governmental buildings. The setting sun shines over the old town and behind it on the wonderful, elephant-grey, double-coned volcanic mountain, the Hussein Gazi, that stands out as a very definite and impressive personality from all the soft-bluish mountains of the more distant surroundings.

Amid this heroic landscape the old capital, Istanbul, is forgotten. Yet it is not long since it seemed to be the most beautiful of all cities, built as it is on the shores of peninsulas and the slopes of hills, striving steeply upwards from the sea yet always as it were akin with the sea. Nowhere else are houses, both stone and timber, so much an integral part of the landscape. They lie like a carpet spread over the hills, brownish, reddish, yellow. And above them the outlines of the minarets and great cupolas

of the mosques, sometimes appearing as dark shadows against the sky, sometimes lighted up by the sun, with their points gleaming gold. The unique beauty of this city is the ever-repeated view of the sea. The road goes round a corner between tall houses, and all at once it falls away sheer down to the sea, and opposite is a glimpse of Stambul or a piece of Galata or of Haidar Pasha. Beyond them again the blue shapes of the Princes' Islands, and beyond these on clear days the snowy mountain peaks of the Asiatic Olympus.

At Istanbul both Turks and foreigners will say: 'Two days at Angora will be all you want.' In Angora they say: 'Foreigners should not spend more than a day in Stambul, but a fortnight in the capital.' Both are wrong. For these two cities are the two extreme poles of the country. Only some one who knows Istanbul can realize why present-day Angora was bound to come into existence. Any one who does not know Angora knows nothing of the new Turkish republic.

Byzantium, Constantinople, Stambul, is the city of splendour, of gold, of those born in the purple, for ever occupied by fresh conquerors, eastern or western, repeatedly destroyed, and always rebuilt on an even more magnificent scale. Warrior races came, lived here, and went under in luxury and over-refinement of life. Even now an educated western European may suddenly be overcome in one of the cultured homes of Istanbul with the feeling that he is nothing but a barbarian after all. Curious parallels may be drawn. When Byzantium began to disintegrate, it was western Europeans—'Franks'—who came ostensibly to protect the threatened Christian city of East Rome. They settled there and plundered city and country, drained it dry. The Crusaders gave Christian Byzantium its death-blow. One is almost tempted to say that the Osmanlis, though Mussulmans, restored it. And when the Ottoman empire in its turn began to totter, when on all sides peoples rose against it, it was once again western Europeans—they called themselves Capitulations' Powers or the Concert of the Powers now—who alleged that they wished to support the sick body, to introduce reforms and civilization; but who nevertheless—though abetted by the Sultan's maladministration and corruption—did no more than exploit the country to the very uttermost.

When the Turkish people revolted against the Treaty of Sèvres, Constantinople was in the hands of the Allies. The Sultan and his Cabinet did what French and English military men or the Big Four in Paris told them. The capital of the country was paralysed. Since the conclusion of the new peace treaty Istanbul, despite the fortifications that had been erected, was even more seriously threatened than in the days of the old Ottoman empire. It is true that it is protected on the one side by impregnable straits. But it lies only fifty miles beyond the frontier of the nearest European State. Angora is in a very different position. Even during the wars of liberation the headquarters of the army were established in the agricultural college outside the town. It was not sentimentality nor the memory of the hard times he went through in rousing his countrymen to fight for their own liberation that led the President of the Turkish State to make Angora the capital of the country. The strength of the country did not lie in the Europeanized portion of the State. Its strength lay in the Anatolian peasantry. And Angora is situated in the middle of Anatolia, guarded by high mountain ranges, sloping down into the Black Sea, the Sea of Marmara and the Mediterranean. To the east it is guarded against Iran by mountains twelve thousand feet and more in height. The history of Turkey is beginning again at the point where it was left by the first members of the House of Osman, when they crossed over to Europe, conquered Constantinople, and sent their vast armies to Vienna and away into Morocco.

The only objections that might be made to the choice of this particular place as capital would be economic ones. Angora lies on a highland plateau in the midst of steppes and grazing land. The Angora goat, an animal whose demands are few, flourishes here; but fruit trees and vegetables, cattle and wheat, do not, at least not without a great deal of artificial assistance, especially in the matter of irrigation. As a result Angora is the most expensive place in all Turkey. If he remarks on this, the visitor is told that Angora is a symbol. When the problem of Angora has been resolved, the whole problem of the reorganization of Turkey will have been resolved. For it will mean that not only, as at present, the necessary railways are in existence, but also good, practicable roads from one place to another; it will mean

that the irrigation problem has been solved; the cultivation of all parts now lying fallow; the question of the finishing industry. Istanbul can live without Anatolia. Angora cannot. If Angora is to prosper it must make sure that Anatolia is doing well. It is a circle; not a *circulus vitiosus*, but a *circulus prosperitatis*.

Why are care and trouble still expended on Istanbul if it is nothing but a historical relic? Why is not the whole of Istanbul allowed to perish like the beautiful ruin of the baroque palace near the Sultan Suleiman mosque, like the little Empire palace that is falling to pieces amid slag-heaps besides the Bosphorus? Why are not the deep holes in the side streets permitted to spread and encroach upon the main arteries of communication? The answer is twofold. Istanbul commands the Straits and that is a situation of political power, to-day as always, over against the Mediterranean countries, the Black Sea countries, and Great Britain. Secondly, Istanbul is an important centre of trade between Asia and Europe, between north and south, between east and west. And that, to-day as always, means money. The more highly the economic structure of Turkey is evolved, the more wealth will the commercial port of Istanbul produce.

Thus the two cities live side by side like two brothers—one of them a civil servant, stern, simple, straightforward; the other a great merchant, living in a beautiful house full of artistic treasures, with a varying income, sometimes living beyond his means, at other times doing extremely well. The civil servant is the stronger of the two. And the merchant, accustomed above all to think of his gains, realizes the good that can be done by a man who quietly does his duty. Thus a certain fraternal rivalry may exist between the two. But they stand together, one complements the other, they are both inspired by one spirit, the spirit of the new Kemalist Turkey.

It is not easy to turn a large country lacking both money and population into a modern State. The reorganization of agriculture requires tools and machinery. The exploitation of mines requires factories. Even when factories have been built and new branches of agriculture have been opened out, these are of no use unless the produce can be distributed. The fertile districts as also those containing metal ore and coal are all situated

round the outskirts of the country. The central part consists of a high desolate plateau. Railways were needed to connect the peripheral parts with one another across the high mountains; roads to lead from one village to another, from one town to another. All these things cost money. And there was not much money in the country. Foreign loans were not sought because they would have involved fresh loss of independence. The youthful State held firmly to this principle for fifteen years. At the end of that time its internal strength and external independence were so generally recognized that it was able to afford to take up an English loan.

Nor was it a case of tackling the various requirements one by one. If railroads had been built first, the trains would have run empty. If factories had been built first, they would have failed for lack of raw materials. If agriculture had been first encouraged, the additional quantities of grain would have been left to rot in the east for want of means of transport. Everything had to be started simultaneously. But the former business men and capitalists—Greeks, Armenians, Jews, western Europeans—were no longer in the country. There had not been time for a new, purely Turkish capitalist class to grow up. It was necessary for the State to do everything, rapidly, thoroughly, with small means, and yet with a view to future expansion.

Much foreign criticism has been levelled against the enforced programme of reconstitution. Industrialization was proceeding too rapidly, it has been said; schemes planned solely with a view to the general welfare of the nation without regard to the principles of private enterprise were too costly; the capacity of the factories set up was too great. There is much to be said on the other side. A dictum that characterizes Turkey particularly well runs: 'The impossible becomes possible; the possible remains undone.' That needs some elaboration. Resources in this country, sucked dry as it had been by maladministration, foreign exploitation and wars, were very limited. To do the impossible requires special efforts; the possible will come of itself in time. What has been planned on a vast scale for the country as a whole has already been accomplished in a smaller way in the building of the capital. A group of administrative buildings was raised on a slight elevation, a mile away a modern college was

erected, and in the valley a site was laid out for a large exhibition. At first there was nothing in between but steppes, pasture land for sheep, heaps of rubble, and probably also a long, dead straight asphalt road. At that time no doubt the fine urban buildings scattered about the landscape must have presented a very curious appearance. To-day everything has grown together to form an organic whole. A fine, well-planned, convenient town has come into being. The first huge buildings in the city of Angora were the 'impossible'. The dwelling-houses and parks and coffee-houses in between were the 'possible', that came afterwards because it was easier.

Construction is proceeding on the same scale throughout the country. For the time being perhaps some of the modern factories and concerns may seem to be out of proportion to the sources of supply and demand. Mile after mile of uninhabited and apparently uncultivated country are crossed by a single railway track, a single road, a single telegraph line. The three sugar factories which exist to-day may be too much for the present condition of the sugar-beet industry. But there they are; the money has been paid out and the State has adjusted itself to the expenditure. The extension of the acreage suitable for sugar-beet cultivations will be the easier part, the 'possible', that may be carried out later on. And the production of sugar, even when it has been raised to its full capacity will certainly not be too great for the land of Turkish Delight, and all the many varieties of exotic sweetmeats.

The modern economists in Angora, with their theories of planned economy, feel that the most important thing is to proceed with the industrialization of the country on a truly American scale. But actually the wealth and the future of the country even now depend upon agriculture. It is easier to plan textile combines than to raise agriculture out of its state of backwardness. That will be obvious to any one who has travelled a few hundred miles in the south and west of the Anatolian country. He will very soon come to the conclusion that Anatolia consists entirely of clay. The mountains, violet-red and of wonderful shapes, yellowish-green and elephant-grey, rocky as they may appear, are formed of clay, even to the tops of the passes. The highland plateau in the centre of the country—by no means a



uniform flat plain but a hilly landscape, bounded on the one side by mountains always snow-covered in the spring—even the highland plateau consists of clay. The clay is sometimes dark brown, sometimes grey, yellowy-white, rust coloured, reddish-violet. A geologist will give it all kinds of different names, and will tell of numerous limestone hills. The layman sees only clay. In dry places and after sunny days it will be as hard as rock, scarcely to be broken with a pickaxe. After a few days' rain it turns to a tenacious morass. The Turkish word for it is 'chamur'—an excellent and most expressive word.

In the places where rivers and brooks run through the clay even during the summer, in the coastal districts along the Sea of Marmara, along the Mediterranean, and along the Black Sea, spring and in some cases summer has arrived by April. There are bright green cornfields, olive and fig trees, mulberry bushes, wild oleander, orange and lemon trees in blossom, roses in bloom. But on the high plateau at the same time of year the thermometer will often register something below zero at nights. Dreary steppes and pasture land extend for mile after mile, the road runs dead straight up hill and down dale without ever passing an inhabited spot. The only living beings to be seen for hours at a time are shepherds and goatherds with their big, fierce, off-white wolfhounds; not a tree, not a bush far and wide. Prices for land in Turkey correspond with these enormous climatic differences. They vary between 1·14 and 16·79 Turkish pounds for every ten ares (something under a quarter of an acre) of agricultural land, a Turkish pound being worth about four shillings. A sketch-map of the agricultural produce of Anatolia shows tea, oranges, hazelnuts, silkworms, tobacco, and timber along the Black Sea coast; corn, tobacco, fruit, rice along the Sea of Marmara; silkworms, sultanas, olives, cotton, tobacco, opium, figs, oranges, vines, and corn on the Mediterranean coast. But for the interior of the country the only things mentioned are cattle breeding and corn. Vast stretches of country are blank altogether. This is very easy to understand, for even now after fifteen years of constructive work only one-sixth of the surface of Anatolia is cultivated.

The Turkish newspaper *Cumhuriyet* explains this as follows:

For centuries those who were in charge of public affairs in this country neglected the village dweller. They did not even get so far as to permit him to know three varieties of vegetables. Districts that old chroniclers describe as green and well-timbered are quite unrecognizable to-day. These same parts lie before our eyes as so many dry and endless steppes. The destruction of forests is not due only to fires and ignorance. Our evil governors, who belonged chiefly to alien races, sold the sources of our wealth to imperialistic European capitalists. We cannot forget the beautiful forests of Rumelia which the Orient Railway Company, with the full permission of the Ottoman Government, cut down.

Such is the condition to-day of a country which according to archaeologists supported forty million people in earlier times; a country from which originate most of the cultivated plants and especially all kinds of fruits grown in Europe, and that is now doing its best to make the desert places fruitful again by the laborious efforts of its sixteen and a half million inhabitants.

On the outskirts of Angora, between the steppe and the capital, stands the Turkish Agricultural College. It is housed in a series of large and up-to-date buildings, with spacious lecture-rooms, an excellent library, numerous laboratories and small specialist museums. The visitor will over and over again meet with the German language. In one department he will find a professor from Vienna, in another an expert from Berlin. The chief assistant in the gardening section is an able young Turk who studied and worked at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute at Münchenberg. He showed us some successful grafting of apricots, and the methods of preserving fruits. A whole room in this section is filled with samples of different varieties of beans grown in Turkey. They seem to be innumerable, red, brown, white, and yellow, plain and speckled, little dry seeds each in its own glass container. The struggle against vermin; against malaria; improvements in the production of cotton and wool; the production of vegetable dyes—those are some of the spheres of work. In addition pure zoology and botany are studied. A few miles outside the town in another direction is the Chiftlik, the model estate that has been established on the hard, dry, clay soil. And the way through the country, both north and south, runs past large whitewashed houses, surrounded by walls and trees. These are newly established agricultural experimental stations, for

tobacco in one place, for cotton in another, and in the east for tea.

The great problem now is how to build the bridge that will connect these modern scientific institutions with the peasantry in every part of the country. The peasant is conservative as peasants are all over the world. Until a very short time ago the Anatolian peasant used a wooden plough as his ancestors did a thousand and two thousand years ago and as archaeologists say the Hittites did four thousand years ago. To this day it is possible to find gaily painted peasant carts with wheels made of solid disks of wood. Soon they will only be found in museums as rare relics of ethnographic interest. It is a far cry from the present extensive culture (fertilizers are hardly known yet; the fields are alternately cultivated and left fallow year and year about) to the application of knowledge of the starch contents and combustion coefficients of the various types of wheat, which has been discovered by means of ingenious apparatus at the college in Angora. A pessimistic Turkish proverb says: 'Wheat turns to rye.' This miracle of nature is explained by the fact that crops were often not carefully tended in the old days. A few grains of rye among the wheat will start the transformation. Year by year there will be more of them. And at last the rye will oust the wheat. Recently winnowing machines have been distributed in the villages. In some villages they work twenty hours a day; they have made good. In another village the Government official may ask a peasant whose crop is inferior and whose fields are producing at most a third of their potential yield: 'Why didn't you run your seed corn through the machine?' And get the answer: 'My father worked without a machine. Why should I do otherwise?'

This 'conservative' spirit is being systematically combatted. In the middle of April 1938 the *Cumhuriyet* published a series of articles upon agriculture, and said that it was not enough to provide the peasantry with machinery, up-to-date tools, and thoroughbred cattle. 'It is a change of outlook, it is the taste for novelty, that must above all else be cultivated among the peasantry. A breach must be made in their conservative spirit. The peasant must learn to believe in the power of science in the domain of agriculture.' The young Turkish assistant at the

college says: 'The peasants don't like being told anything. But once we can show them results, they will act on them.' By now there are many who have recognized such results and who are acting on them. Thus in an uninhabited district suddenly a ploughing tractor may be seen. Again, according to the latest experiments, there are hopes that within the next few years the yield of milk per cow, which up to a short time ago was not much more than sixty-five gallons a year, may be raised to the European average of about four hundred and fifty gallons annually. In the old days the cow was fed on whatever she could pick up at pasture; during the winter perhaps a little straw might be added. In years of drought the peasants, having no fodder, were obliged simply to slaughter the cattle. In future they are not only to be provided with valuable cows but also with lupin seed and the chance of procuring fodder.

It is possible to drive for miles without seeing a fence or a hedge or a wall or a boundary stone, especially in pastoral districts. Whose is the land? The impression produced is that it is nobody's. But the archaeologist says: 'You need only begin to dig and you will soon find that it belongs to somebody. It may even belong to four people at once.' The search for the owner of the land presents great difficulties. Before the War three-quarters of the land are said to have belonged to the Wakf—the administrative authority of pious Islamic foundations. The system is most nearly comparable with our own 'mortmain' properties before they were secularized. The Wakf administration in Turkey was also secularized after the War of Liberation, and now comes under the Home Office. However, the tradition is not being broken all at once. The winding up of these centuries' old, most complicated, forms of land tenure is proceeding slowly, in order that hardship may be avoided. Even more complicated is the old leasehold system. A landowner may be living in a provincial town without having anything to do with his land, which he has leased to some one. The tenant has sublet it. This sometimes happens three or four deep; the ultimate tenant is the farmer who really works the land. And this actual tiller of the soil only gets half the profits whether the years are good or bad.

The first of the four points in the agrarian programme of

Jelal Bayar, the last Prime Minister under Atatürk, runs: 'No peasant without his own land.' This is not so hard to achieve as in central Europe where land is scarce. Anatolia contains too few people and too much land. Indeed there are parts where industry and agriculture are competing for the same men as workers. But the organization of land-distribution is not easy. According to the newspaper *Beyoglu* the following areas of land were distributed during the years 1930 to 1937:

	<i>Hectares</i> (1 Ha = about 2 acres)	<i>Value in</i> <i>Turkish pounds</i>
1930	7,449.0	521,499
1931	22,908.9	1,305,014
1932	2,467.7	146,552
1933	10,402.9	442,014
1934	67,674.8	1,525,441
1935	12,778.9	470,952
1936	4,278.0	188,937
1937	127.9	23,556

The great differences in the specified values are due to the fact that in the various years land was distributed in different districts where very different prices rule.

Mahomet the Prophet forbade the charging of interest. None the less the Turkish peasant, if his harvest was bad and he got into difficulties, was obliged to borrow money and to pay dearly for it. Only he did not realize that he was paying interest. The following episode occurred a few years ago. Ismet Inonu, the former Prime Minister and now President of the State, went to eastern Anatolia to a place where it was proposed to encourage the cultivation of hazelnuts. In a certain village he gathered the men about him, in order to discuss the matter with them. A peasant was asked: 'Have you got enough money to buy the plants?' The peasant: 'No, I haven't any money. But Ahmed down in the village has given me some.' Ismet Inonu: 'Oh, so Ahmed has given you some, has he? What interest is he asking you to pay?' The peasant: 'Interest? Oh no. Ahmed isn't that kind of man. He doesn't charge interest.' Ismet Inonu: 'Well, how much money did he give you, and how much are you going to return to him?' The peasant: 'He gave me fifty pounds, and in three months' time I shall pay him back seventy.' It is clear

that when he was actually paying such a high rate of interest the peasant was bound to get into the hands of money-lenders. He was obliged to bind himself to sell his wheat or his tobacco only to the man who provided the money, and this man had the power to depress prices. He was obliged to pledge himself to buy only from his benefactor—at correspondingly high prices. Peasants all over the world suffer in the same way. The Turkish Government has been trying to help them out of their troubles by means of agrarian Banks and agrarian credits. A branch of the Agrarian Bank is to be found even in little places with only five thousand inhabitants.

The second burden upon the peasantry is taxation. Before the War there was also the tithe, which was collected with great harshness, and that was used to pay for the huge expenditure that went on in Stambul. The tithe was abolished by the republic. In its stead direct taxes were put upon cattle and land. Indirect taxes are contained in, for example, the high price paid for petroleum. On the other hand there is a good and cheap variety of cigarettes that is sold only to the rural population in the villages. Any great lowering of taxation is impossible for a State that is trying to work its way up again after centuries of maladministration. Every class must contribute its share, including the peasant class. However, in the year 1938 a Bill was passed, with certain important changes in view. The tax on a sheep, which had hitherto been forty piastres a year is to be lowered to thirty piastres (about a shilling). Twenty-five instead of thirty piastres are in future to be paid for each goat. Cattle breeders on a large scale pay up to twenty-five per cent less cattle tax than owners of only a few head. While from 1931 to 1936 the tax on a horse was one hundred and twenty-five and on a donkey fifty piastres, the rates were lowered two years ago to sixty and twenty-five piastres respectively. They are now to be abolished entirely. The purpose of the first change was to lower the burdens upon agriculture by simultaneously increasing the production of cattle and decreasing the price of meat. The abolition of the tax on horses has a particular purpose. Kemal Ataturk expressed the hope that in time each peasant would possess a plough and a pair of horses. If the tax on oxen still continues to be sixty piastres, the encouragement to buy a horse.

is so much the greater. Thus the system of planned economy is being applied even to agriculture.

Any one who has been walking along a road—looking for a spare wheel that has fallen off, for example—and has been overtaken by a peasant cart and invited to get in and drive; any one who—having got stuck in the mud—has hired a span of oxen or horses to pull his car out; any one who, night after night, has slept in a tent on the pastures or on the edge of fields, will have learnt to know the Anatolian peasant. Before the War there was a saying, coined by the English, which named the Turk ‘the first gentleman of Europe’. It was used in reference to the Turks of Stambul, for in those days hardly any one ever knew any other Turks. The present writer would like to apply the expression to the Anatolian peasant. He has courtesy and tact to a degree that always rouses fresh wonder. Something that is a matter of course in almost all Mediterranean countries, Christian or Moslem—that a gaping and often begging crowd collects round any stranger—is simply unheard of in Turkey. You may camp beside a field path. In the mornings at five o’clock amid the dissolving mists the peasants with their beasts go past the entrance to the tent at two yards’ distance on the way to work. Never an inquisitive look is cast into the tent. Even the village children would do no more than climb up a mound behind a neighbouring hedge to peep.

But if the traveller should be in need of anything then those peasants are on the spot, ready with help and—which is perhaps just as important—with intelligence. To make oneself understood, even in very sketchy Turkish, is much easier in the country than in the towns. And if the dialect in a lonely mountain pass differs too greatly from the foreigner’s faulty pronunciation, there is sure to be a jolly little schoolboy who will seize the dictionary and tell the older men the necessary words. The father, however old he may be, gives the orders, and the sons do as they are bid. Pedestrians are seldom seen. Walking in the ‘chamur’ is no joke. The people come riding on donkeys or well-kept, slender-limbed horses. Even three- and four-year old boys ride their own donkeys, sitting on fine lace cushions, and they carefully and skilfully turn them with their tails to the middle of the road if they see a car coming. The Turks were a

nation of horsemen when they came into Anatolia centuries ago. They have remained a nation of horsemen even as a settled peasantry. No doubt this gives them the air of dignity that distinguishes them from the peasantry of many other countries.

This character-sketch of the Anatolian people is important in order to give an understanding of the essentials of Kemal Atatürk's reconstruction of the State, of his educational work. His material has been the peasant—who, from an historical point of view, has only recently settled down—the nomad, and a very small middle class in the towns. He had no feudal aristocracy to contend with. There has never been one. Under the Ottoman empire it was possible for the gifted and ruthless son of a peasant to become a vizir, and on the other hand for a powerful family to fade into nothingness. The country throughout is more democratic than perhaps any other in the world. Every one is a gentleman in his own way. Kemal Atatürk was once visiting a village and the people thronged about him. The President saw a familiar face and said: 'Surely I know you?' And the man replied: 'Yes. I fought under you in 1915, in the artillery.' The two shook hands, and the man said: 'So you have become President. I'm doing well too. I've become an elder of the village.'

There is no landed aristocracy and no hereditary aristocracy. But as a result there is no tradition and no popular hierarchy. There is only a collection of individuals. And there is the clan. It is all-powerful. It is a relic of nomadic days. At that time it was essential that there should always be an experienced man to lead the clan. Hence heredity is not reckoned from father to son but to the oldest man in the clan. The uncle carries weight, not the youth. Blood relationship is to this day the strongest bond between man and man in the Near East. Relationship is recognized and cherished to the fifth and sixth degree. An obituary notice will contain a long list of names in close print—members of the dead man's clan.

This forms a tenacious mass; not to be grasped, not to be moulded. The people cling together immovably. It may happen that a woman with three children, some cushions, rugs, and bundles, will appear one day on the threshold of the house of a citizen of Kayseri or Bursa or Angora. She is a relative. Her



husband may have died; or perhaps he is in prison. She is of the house, she will be taken in, for weeks, for months, for years.

These ties are almost as reactionary and almost as hard to break through as the religious bonds. Yet it is necessary at least to loosen them. The youths who were sent to school and college in the 'twenties of this century were most attentive during lectures. They went home intending to work, but often came back without having done so. For, once he was at home, the lad was in his family. He was obliged to devote his attention to an aunt or to some relative from the provinces, or to play dominoes with his uncle. In return, the uncle felt it to be his duty to provide a good post for his nephew if he himself came into high office. The whole State was permeated by nepotism on a vast scale. Practical concerns never entered into consideration when a post was to be filled, only the question of whether a man took his duty to his family seriously. The necessity to break through these ties which were even more potent in Stambul, where clan-tradition was powerful, than in the new Angora, this necessity was no doubt the reason for a system that was consistently carried out and that at first surprised foreigners—that of residential State colleges. All those studying at the Gazi Institute for the training of middle school teachers are boarders, as are also two-thirds of the students of Angora University. So also the students at the Agricultural College. Even the School of Music is residential. Children are admitted to this school after five years' elementary study. They continue to learn history and Turkish, geography and mathematics. But the main subject is music, in which there are three courses—orchestra, opera, and training for teaching. Things are evidently carried on in the liveliest fashion here—rhythmic gymnastics with a fair-haired German teacher at the piano, musical dictation, the humming of songs and parts of operas in the dormitories, brisk conversation at tea-time in the dining-room.

Tuition and board and lodging are free. Every one, therefore, who has been thus educated at the cost of the State is bound to work for the State for a certain time afterwards—high school teachers for eight years following their examinations, with slowly increasing salaries, and musicians for a number of years that varies according to the length of time spent on their training.

This brings us into the middle of the educational problem. Schooling, university studies, training for teaching only represent a small part of the whole work of education in Turkey. Kemal Ataturk had two completely different educational methods, and he is praised or blamed by foreigners according to the point of view from which they regard it. One method was by direct precept, exactly like any other sort of education. Certain stages of development are 'pre-reasoning'. A five-year-old child puts on its goloshes unwillingly; it has not yet learnt the causal connection between rain, wet feet, and a cold in the head. The Anatolian people, having been retarded in their evolution during the past century, were still in a pre-reasoning state in the year 1920. Hence, instead of attempts at convincing them, drastic regulations were made. Any man who did not change his fez for a hat, a woman who persisted in holding up a veil in front of her face, a domestic servant who omitted to learn the Latin characters, was severely punished. To-day all these things have become a matter of course, and a return to fez or veil would be unimaginable. So new regulations have been made. The donkey that used to bring round boxes containing fresh bread, fruit, and vegetables to the houses has been replaced by the horse in Istanbul. Very soon small motor-vans will be seen all over the streets. The porter who used in the old days to carry water in two pails hung on a yoke over his shoulders now carries it in a little wheeled cart. In places where the roads are still rough and full of holes he may groan over this mechanical device. For in this case evolution has proceeded more rapidly along one line than along the other though they were really intended to be cause and effect.

In the winter of 1937 Kemal Ataturk made one of his tours of inspection through the country. On these tours he used to gather village populations about him, and make them tell him all their joys and sorrows, so as to be able personally to watch over the development of the whole nation. In the course of this journey the Gazi visited a village school and listened to lessons in reading and writing. Suddenly he seemed angry, seized the book, and looked through it. To his extreme annoyance he found that in it the Turkish phrases were still interspersed with numerous Arabic and Persian words, words which had been abolished and

replaced by others. Telegraph lines to Angora and Stambul were soon humming, the State printers were set to work overtime, and a week later every village school, no matter how small or how remote, had new reading primers written in the official Turkish language.

Only a few years ago the President examined schools in reading and writing the Latin characters, and sometimes he even stood up at the blackboard himself to give a lesson in writing. Latterly he was no longer concerned with the reform of writing—for it had been carried out—but with the reform of the language and with Anatolian history. A foreign visitor invited for an afternoon's sail on the Bosphorus with the President might have found that the heavy cases which were put on board did not prove to contain the expected bottles of raki or wine but books and books and more books. The difficulty to be solved by him and the President was, say, that the Turkish language was lacking in a terminology for the higher mathematics. And while the romantic landscape of the Bosphorus slipped by outside, while the boat turned and passed by the Princes' Islands, the two men, the President and his visitor, would be sitting in the cabin poring over folders and books, working out the problem in language.

Here we come to the second principle upon which Ataturk worked. He wished the nation to learn to think independently in its own language. While our path in Europe seems to be leading away from the purely intellectual, Turkish feet have been set in one leading in the exactly opposite direction. It leads away from rigid religious restrictions towards reason. Nothing is more misleading than to make comparisons. Undoubtedly modern Turkey is above all a nationalist State; Kemal Ataturk was a nationalist, and his government authoritarian. But to speak of a dictatorship in Turkey is false, unless it be the dictatorship of rationalism. The historical and psychological bases of East and West are utterly different, at least in so far as they have resulted from the history of the past few centuries.

In some European States the long habit of free speech may have led to certain manifestations of disintegration, in Turkey free speech is particularly encouraged. During the first few years of the wars of liberation and of the republic Ataturk spent days

and nights in discussion with his officers, with the members of parliament, with provincial notables, with his ministers. He was capable of talking for seven or eight hours at a stretch. He could always think of some fresh argument. He did not wish the people to obey orders because they were orders but because they understood the reason for them. He wanted them to be convinced, by reason, by logic. When it was necessary, of course, he was capable of getting his own way with the expenditure of very few words, as in the case of the separation of the Sultanate and the Caliphate. The Moslem dignitaries planned to prove the impossibility of the proceeding in conferences lasting for days. Mustafa Kemal informed them, once and for all, that the step had been decided upon and that if they persisted in opposing it, it would be the worse for them. It was a revelation of a new kind to which the priesthood proved receptive. But this was an exceptional case. And the clearest indication of the way in which Kemal Atatürk regarded his task as President is given by the fact that after the end of the War he never wore uniform again. He was a convinced civilian. He did his best to educate a nation of civilians, a nation whose courage should be moral courage.

There was an immense distance to cover. He tried to do in decades things that had taken centuries to evolve in Europe. The psychological state of Turkey at the beginning of the twentieth century is most nearly comparable with that in the days of the Schoolmen. All Turkish schools were religious schools. For centuries the Turks, like all Moslems, learnt nothing except to know portions of the Koran by heart. The one who could repeat the greatest number of suras from memory was considered to be the most learned. This was a tradition not to be shaken off completely within a few years. Foreign teachers at Turkish colleges still tell astonishing stories of the feats of memory performed by their pupils. Chemical formulae, mathematical formulae, that an average European could never keep in his head are learnt and repeated by them with the utmost ease. Things that the teacher said three terms ago can be repeated word for word to-day. But the new function they have to learn is how to think—to reason how and why a chemical formula comes into being. That is where they fall woefully short still. The way from reproducing to producing for themselves is

hard for a nation in which for generations independence and initiative were regarded as unseemly.

It is most instructive to look at the faces of all the various young people studying in Angora. There are the students from the agricultural college, sturdy, sports-loving young men; there are the students from the teachers' training college, the Gazi Institute, among them a good many girls—they are paler than the agriculturalists and their faces have a strained look. And finally there are the high school and secondary school pupils to be seen about the streets. The girls especially are noticeable with vivid spirited faces beneath the blue student caps. They have eyes shining with enterprise, grey-blue eyes as well as brown and black. Perhaps they are a trifle tomboyish, but they look as if they were ready to face life. Looking at these youngsters, the thirteen-, fourteen-, and fifteen-year-olds, it is easy to believe that Atatürk's experiment has been a success. It is impossible to believe that these children would sit on the floor in a Koranic school to chant in chorus verses of the Koran as the teacher says them. They seem to demand knowledge, something that shall be factual and interesting, if they are to sit still. But of course they are almost the second generation, the children of mothers who have for years been accustomed to go about the streets freely, to take part in public life. These young people may make it possible some day to bring to pass what has always failed hitherto but which was nevertheless Kemal Atatürk's dearest wish—the transition from the first method to the second throughout the life of the State. In other words, that the people shall be capable of self-determination upon their own initiative and responsibility.

Democracy is a legacy from the old empire. But it was a passive form of democracy, natural to a people that lived under the system of an eastern and frequently despotic absolutism. Their very religion taught them resignation. The natural surroundings amid which they lived taught them the same. The Sultan, in whose hands their lives lay absolutely, made the doctrine inevitable.

Mustafa Kemal was determined to change this, to introduce an active form of democracy. 'Government by the people for the people' was one of his first principles. Each individual must

play his part in the life of the State. His first attempt in this direction failed. It was the establishment of an Opposition to balance what had hitherto been the only Party, the Republican People's Party. It led to riots and bloodshed but to no serious work. The old principle still held good—that there was only one Party, the governing Party, and because it governed it was right at all times and in all places. It cannot be denied that Kemal Ataturk's first educational method, the decree system, which was necessary to settle the most immediately urgent problems—contributed to supporting the old ideas. The force of his personality and of his being as a matter of actual fact right in all decisive situations, still further contributed towards it.

The second attempt, in so far as it is proceeding along parliamentary lines, is being carried out very much more warily. At the elections in 1935 permission was given for certain 'independent' candidates to stand. They were not members of the Republican People's Party. They were well-known men whose names carried weight, men whose words would be listened to.

It is not yet possible to prophesy how these matters will evolve further. We are in the habit of comparing everything with European models. This method applied to Turkey gives quite a false impression. The so-called Europeanization is only a part of the greater internal transformation. Turkey's premisses are different, its aim is different, and the way in which it is pursuing that aim only apparently runs parallel. Over and over again you will hear in Angora: 'Europe is sick. We want to take over its technical achievements, its civilization, but not its mistakes.'

Europe's social problem is unknown in Anatolia where land is plentiful and the population sparse. Perhaps it may be possible to hold the balance between industrialization and the introduction of intensive methods of agriculture, to awaken an active sense of responsibility among the people without destroying State discipline, and to build up a new form of State and social communal life upon new foundations. As yet the whole thing is like a vast piece of mosaic in which each little stone must be set separately. In one place a whole section may have been finished, in another the design to come is only faintly discernible, and sometimes the bare background is still visible. The construction of this State mosaic is only possible by means of ever closer

co-operation between many individual minds. Behind all of these many minds—some slow, some quick—has hitherto been the regulating, educating progressive mind of Atatürk, the 'Father of the Turks'. Those who hope for the unbroken and continued evolution of the Turkish people could have wished that it might have been with them for many years longer.

## IRAN

The situation of Turkey and Iran was very similar before the War. Both had been great empires and had fallen to decay; and both had been victims of exploitation by the Capitulations' Powers. After the War, almost at the same time, a strong man appeared in each of them to save his country. This seems to continue the likeness so strongly up to the most recent time that the student of Oriental affairs is tempted over and over again to compare the development of the two States.

Quite apart from the great personal differences between the two leaders, this is a mistake if only because the historical background of the two States is so completely dissimilar. A single dynasty ruled in the Ottoman empire from the time of its foundation until after the World War. Certain of its representatives were weak men, others were evil, but in between whiles there were always Sultans who did their best to oil the machinery of State that was running with ever-increasing difficulty, or to provide new wheels for it. Certain traditions of administrative practice were preserved and remained vital. In Persia, on the other hand, there were continual changes of dynasty during the same centuries. After the Mongols came the Safavids. Chardin says of Shah Abbas, the greatest ruler of this dynasty: 'Persia's prosperity came to an end with the death of this great Prince.' While the last of the Safavids—who in the matter of State reforms were to Persia what the first Sultans of the Osman dynasty were to Turkey—still occupied the throne, the Afghans invaded the country and set up a foreign rule, though a short-lived one. Then followed the mighty and cruel Nadir Shah of the Turkoman House of Afshar. After him came an erstwhile general, Kerim Khan Shah. After him followed the Kajars, who were of Turkish origin; though their rule was of long duration

(1796-1926) they rather encouraged than prevented the downfall of the State. The seat of government was continually changed. At one time it was at Tabriz in the north, then at Kasvin, then at Ispahan. For a short while, even, at Shiraz in the south. Finally Teheran was chosen—a city which cannot compare with any of the older ones in traditions of culture. The rulers looked upon it as their duty to conduct wars and to fill their treasury for war purposes. Certain among them made the hoarding of treasure an end in itself. There were no traditions of upright statecraft and administration. Or, rather, the traditions handed down from ancient days came to have independent lives of their own and grew rank.

It is probably no exaggeration to say that only one strong and abiding tradition remained—that of maladministration. It must be emphasized that this refers only to affairs of State. In countries that are oppressed and exploited a curious kind of intermediate sphere develops, in which traditions of personal living and culture are fostered—an intangible 'private' sphere which yields to every official and governmental pressure, which learns the habit of evasion without surrender. And so it was in Iran. It was that which produced the charm and the courtesy of the private individual in Persia which was extolled by all who lived in Persia and made friends among the Persians. It is like a kind of protective inoculation, which permits the peaceable person to live in his own fashion, always wondering a little nervously what unpleasantness the next day will bring forth, always doubting whether honesty and real goodwill in public affairs are possible.

This habit of cutting certain strata—and by no means necessarily the worst—entirely out of political and public life represents a national danger perhaps never yet sufficiently recognized—the dispersion and destruction of the foundations upon which the structure of the State must be raised. Violet Sackville-West gives an excellent epitome of the dangers arising from this attitude of mind and character:

For the ruler of Persia, however, half the problem lies precisely in the character of that nation; easy to dominate, because energy meets with no opposition, they are, once dominated, impossible to use; there is no material to build with; like all weak, soft people,



they break and discourage the spirit sooner than a more difficult, vigorous race; there may be nothing to fight against, but equally there is nothing that will fight in alliance with the leader. This character leads naturally to the innumerable abuses and corruptions from which Persia suffers; the absence of justice, the sale of offices, the corruption, bribery, peculation, and general dishonesty that appal the beholder, not only from a moral point of view, but also from exasperation with the stupidity and elaboration of such a system. This internal rot, no less than the political pressure from England and Russia, must complicate the position of any energetic ruler; it is the most urgent thing, the thing which must be cleaned out before any other problem is dealt with, such problems as transport, under-population, irrigation, the condition of the peasant, the cultivation of the land.<sup>1</sup>

Before the War the country was divided up into administrative districts. The post of regional governor was sold to the man who offered the highest price. Naturally his one idea during a possibly short term of office was to recoup himself for the money expended, and to gather as much as possible beyond that sum. Taxation, jurisdiction, police, and street watchmen were used to serve this end. The tradition of exploitation by taxes is particularly ancient in Persia. It is told of King Kobad, the Sassanian king, that he was once driving in his chariot through a country district and saw a mother slap her child because it picked a bunch of grapes. The mother took the bunch and bound it to the vine again. The king asked her why she did so and her reply was: 'The taxes have not been collected yet.' Before that had taken place a peasant was not even allowed to eat of his own produce. In later centuries taxation in money took the place of taxation in kind. It was no less oppressive.

The representatives of the State were continually collecting money. But the State itself did not pay where its duty was to pay. Soldiers often failed to receive their wages for months or even years at a time. They hired themselves out in the towns as porters or night-watchmen. They were a despised class.

The mountain tribes were strong and greatly feared. They held up caravans, plundering them and holding travellers to high ransom. They attacked and ravaged peaceable villages. They made war upon one another. Among the natives of Luris-

<sup>1</sup> V. Sackville-West: *Passenger to Teheran*, pp. 142-3.

tan stealing was regarded as a national virtue. Tales of especially remarkable exploits were repeated with pride from generation to generation; as, for example, how once rugs and weapons were stolen from the tent of the commander-in-chief of an army despite double guards. It was a matter of course that any traveller, even if he was received in friendship and as a guest by the mountaineers, slept at night upon all he possessed. Even then he might find in the morning that certain articles were missing.

The backbone of the land is its village population. Many of the villages have the appearance of fortresses. They are surrounded by a high mud-coloured clay wall over the top of which no one from outside can catch a glimpse of the village. Behind it stand the little clay huts of the inhabitants, possibly one or two walled-in orchards, and if the village is a rich one there may be a bath. The village and any cultivated land belongs to landowners who live as rich men in towns or on estates of their own. The landlord keeps an agent in the village who superintends the distribution of water and collects the rents. Water is delivered free. The irrigation system is a peculiar invention of the Persians, suited to the conditions prevailing in the country. They did not, as did the Romans, build superficial aqueducts. The water would only have evaporated in that hot dry air. Instead they dug underground channels for the water, called *kanat* (or *karez*), which not only conduct the water through the country from the mountainous districts, but also collect the moisture from the ground-water in damper regions. The loess soil permits of the digging of little tunnels that are seldom lined. Since, however, the mud brought down by the water attaches itself to the sides the *kanats* have perpetually to be cleaned out. Thus the *kanat* holes that are so characteristic of the Persian landscape came into existence—straight rows of earth mounds like huge molehills, at regular intervals; in the middle of the mound is the hole and over it a windlass by means of which skin bags containing the mud that has been scraped off in the cleaning process can be raised.

The villagers were forced to carry out the *kanat* works. Moreover they were obliged to give up half their harvest to the landlords. That was no small thing. They are strong, healthy, often handsome people, whose blue cotton overalls form a wonderful

contrast with the brown-gold of their amber-coloured landscape.

Between the peasantry and the few rich and powerful families there existed only a very thin stratum of independent middle-class people. For centuries buying and selling were regarded by the Persians as contemptible occupations. As a result, almost the whole of Persian trade is in the hands of Armenians, Jews, and Europeans, who form a not always particularly respectable class. The extremely high standard of Persian handicraft and craftsmanship was undermined in the nineteenth century by a flood of cheap European manufactured goods. The natives themselves could no longer compete. Many old artistic traditions were lost.

Mention has already been made of the growing influence of Russia and England as a result of the Shah's borrowing of money. In the last few years before the War the absurd situation existed that Persian independence and integrity were guaranteed by treaty by the two Powers, but in actual fact the country was not independent and yet enjoyed none of the benefits that compensate for a part at least of lost independence in a protectorate, namely an organized administration.

During guerrilla warfare that broke out upon the officially neutral soil of Persia in the World War, and while foreign troops invaded the country from the north and west, England and Russia came to terms over the further partition of the country. England was allotted the hitherto neutral zone in the middle, and in return Russia was given a free hand in the north. This brought to an end the fiction of Persian integrity and independence. The agreement was at first secret. Nor did it harm any one. But after the Russian revolution had taken place the Soviets published all the wicked imperialist secret treaties that the Tsarist Government had concluded. The Persians were quite justifiably indignant. Their indignation was directed in the first instance against England. For by the publication of the treaties the honest Russians had shown that they would never dream of burdening their conscience with similar misdeeds. For the time being, too, the few Russian troops on Persian soil, who were in process of demobilization, represented no sort of danger. On the other hand English troops were stationed north, south, east, and west. To them was added Captain Norris's Naval Mission,

designed to break the hitherto absolute power of Russia in the Caspian Sea.

Meanwhile news of the right to self-determination of peoples, of President Wilson, of the Peace Conference in Paris, had trickled through to Teheran. Hence a delegation to put forward Persian demands was sent to France. The English refused to admit it to the conference—Persia had been neutral, they said, and the conference was concerned only with those who had taken part in the War. The English were of opinion that Persia's future concerned no one but England. It had been they whose troops were bringing order into the country. And as a reward they paid the Teheran Government a monthly subsidy that formed almost the sole source of revenue of the State.

England's attitude of reserve in Paris was not very wise. First of all the Americans grew suspicious. As it was, President Wilson was daily coming more and more to dislike the old methods of diplomacy which he did not understand. Moreover the Persian delegation had no opportunity of stating its demands, and these were at all events rather remarkable as indications of the future aims of the State. Apart from an indemnity for all damage inflicted by the War, claim was laid to the following territory—in the west to Asia Minor up to the Euphrates, including Kurdistan with Diar Bekir and the Mosul district; in the north to the whole of the Caucasus including Baku and Erivan as far as Derbent; in the east to the Trans-Caspian provinces including Merv and Khiva. Presumably even Wilson, who tried to bring an Armenian State into being, would have objected to a part at least of these territorial claims.

In addition to Lloyd George and Balfour, who were carrying on the negotiations in Paris, England also possessed a Foreign Secretary in the person of Lord Curzon. We have already met with him in the Persian Gulf as Viceroy of India. He was familiar with every aspect of the Persian problem, and considered himself to be the particular friend of Persia because he had opposed the Anglo-Russian Agreement in 1907. He was exasperated by the attitude of his colleagues in Paris and determined that he himself would effect a neat piece of diplomacy and settle the Persian question. So the rule that the Foreign Office and the Indian Government are apt to be at

variance was proved true even in the person of an ex-Viceroy himself. Having become Foreign Secretary, he found a bitter opponent in Mr. Edwin Montagu, the head of the India Office.

None the less he continued working out his treaty with Persia. He was most ably supported in Teheran by the new British Minister, Sir Percy Cox, whose acquaintance we have also made in the Persian Gulf. In August 1919, after nine months of work a treaty was concluded, which though it once again affirmed the complete independence and integrity of Persia, can as a whole only be regarded as a veiled treaty of protectorate. The main points concerned the provision of a British Adviser for the Persian Government, British officers to train the army, a British loan of two million pounds, British road and railway building, and a revision of the Customs dues. The status proposed for Persia would have given it much the same position as that of Egypt after the World War—an English government by means of 'Advisers'.

Lord Curzon was well satisfied with his work. President Wilson, on the other hand, was very angry. In Paris the English had prevented him from receiving the Persian delegation; and now it proved that the English had been carrying on secret negotiations with the Persians all the time. The fact that Lord Curzon in London and the Englishmen with whom he had dealt in Paris were by no means of one mind was not known to President Wilson. He was even angrier over the Persian Government's announcement—a fortnight after the conclusion of the treaty with England—that America had left Persia in the lurch and betrayed her. He caused a cable to be sent to the American Minister at Teheran instructing him to say that America had not refused to help Persia and always took the liveliest interest in Persia's well-being.

That was the first blow aimed at Curzon's Agreement. Others followed. For Curzon and Cox had forgotten one or two things. They forgot to append a paragraph to say that the treaty was to be deposited with the League of Nations. That smacked of the old and greatly despised secret diplomacy, and confirmed France's suspicion that England was trying to make Persia into a private preserve. Furthermore, the two forgot that according to the new Persian Constitution of 1906 treaties must be ratified

by the Majlis, that is the parliament. This was an easy point to forget, for up till then the parliament had not played any very great part. Nevertheless it made an excellent excuse for the hesitant Persians to delay the coming into force of the treaty for a little longer.

Meanwhile other things had happened to raise their spirits. The Soviets had recovered and had invaded the Caspian provinces. That in itself, of course, was not a matter for rejoicing. But it brought back the second of the two rivals on to the scene and thus the chance of playing off one against the other. Moreover the English troops were retiring before the Russians. This led to a very caustic letter from Mr. Churchill, then Secretary of State for War, to Lord Curzon, saying:

There is something to be said for making peace with the Bolsheviks. There is also something to be said for making war on them. There is nothing to be said for a policy of doing all we can to help to strengthen them, to add to their influence and prestige, to weaken those who are fighting against them, and at the same time leaving weak British forces tethered in dangerous places where they can easily and suddenly be overwhelmed. I do not see that anything we can do within the present limits of our policy can possibly avert the complete loss of British influence throughout the Caucasus, Transcaspia, and Persia. . . . I must absolutely declined to continue to share responsibility for a policy of mere bluff.<sup>1</sup>

Essentially the treaty had ceased to exist. The only thing needed was a strong personality to express the fact in unmistakable terms. It appeared in the figure of Rheza Khan, a colonel of Cossacks. On 21st February 1921 he marched on Teheran. On 26th February 1921 he declared the Anglo-Persian Treaty to be invalid. On the same day he concluded a treaty with Soviet Russia. As the Russian Treaty of Turkomanchai in 1828 had introduced the capitulations system into Persia, so now the treaty with the Soviets produced the first breach in the system which was not, however, totally abolished until 1928. Moreover the Soviet troops were withdrawn; further, the Moscow Government made a present to the Teheran Government of all its

<sup>1</sup> Harold Nicolson: *Curzon*, pp. 144-5. Winston Churchill to Lord Curzon on May 20th, 1920.

concessions—the Bank, the railway to Tabriz, the roads, the quays. The only thing it reserved was the fishing rights in the Caspian. And a Russian gunboat lay in the northern Persian harbour of Enzeli to safeguard these fisheries.

A new era began. Persia's northern neighbour had made a voluntary withdrawal; its southern neighbour, England, had gone unwillingly. The Cossack colonel's strong personality carried the day. He became, first, Minister for War, then Prime Minister, and in 1926—after the deposition of the last Kajar Prince, who was already living in Europe—he became Shah of Persia. He applied the whole energy of one who had come to know the abuses in the country at first hand to reuniting and reconstituting the country. He developed his army. One after another he subdued rebellious tribes. No longer did the men of Luristan and Bactria plunder caravans; their fastnesses were destroyed, the country was pacified, sky-blue and dark uniformed police officers watched over the security of the roads and inspected the papers of all travellers going in and out of the country. Some of the sheikhs submitted, others succumbed. The Sheikh of Mohammerah remained in Teheran, dreaming of the old days of his freedom on the Shatt-el-Arab.

One thing only had not yet been settled—the money question. The English with their Advisers and army officers had been eliminated, it is true. But all prospect of pounds sterling had gone with them. Persia's new friends, the Soviets, had no money themselves, or at all events only for use in countries that allowed themselves to be revolutionized. And they had just left Persia because they realized that it was 'unrevolutionizable'. So Persia's thoughts returned to the friendly disposed Americans. Mirza Hussein Khan Ala, Iran's ablest diplomatist, was sent to Washington; he negotiated a loan, he negotiated with the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey for an oil concession. The American Foreign Office recommended him to appoint Dr. A. C. Millspaugh as financial adviser. Millspaugh became not merely financial adviser, but actually Administrator-General of Finance in Persia, with wide plenipotentiary powers. He arrived in November 1922, with eleven carefully chosen colleagues. The following words give an idea of the kind of atmosphere that prevailed at that time among foreigners in

Teheran: 'Sceptics gave them three months to become familiar with their task, three months to get the task under way, and three months to collect their salaries before leaving the country in despair.'<sup>1</sup>

Instead, the Americans stayed for five years. Friction was unavoidable. The attempt to collect taxes, not only as of yore from the poor but also from the rich, roused the moral indignation of the propertied class. The dismissal of incapable officials who occupied their posts solely on account of family connections roused every clan to indignation. The murder of the American Vice-Consul Imrie in a street in Teheran in 1924 had not, it is true, anything to do with the Administrator-General of Finance, but it produced a coolness in Americo-Iranian friendship. The crisis came in the autumn of 1926. Reza Khan, who had given full support to the American Finance Commission while he was War Minister and Prime Minister, had meanwhile become Shah. In certain sections of the army the men had not been paid for eight months, while at the same time the officers, strange to say, grew rich. The men mutinied. The Shah went in person to Khorasan, the centre of the disturbance. In order to settle matters he asked for three hundred thousand dollars from the Treasury. The Administrator-General refused to grant the request. The Shah was obliged to borrow money from a Bank in Teheran.

The whole affair was unheard of—even more incomprehensible in the East than in Europe where some States have grown accustomed to put constitutional limits to the powers even of their rulers. There is no doubt that Millspaugh went too far in his righteous zeal for reform. A national crisis had arisen; and at such a time even Western treasuries must be prepared to lend money 'unexpectedly'. Moreover, this demand for money was only a means to put to rights a mischief that had already occurred. The abuses in the army, it may be added, were permanently and most energetically abolished. Finally, Millspaugh was only a foreigner in the Iranian service, and in such a case discretion and tact are sometimes more valuable than one hundred per cent perfection in the financial system.

These internal political troubles, however, only represent one

<sup>1</sup> *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. VI, p. 660.



side of the difficulties with which Millspaugh had to contend. The others came from abroad, from the north, from Russia, exactly as had been the case in the days of Shuster and the first American finance mission. The Soviets abandoned all their concessions, but they clung firmly to the fishing rights in the Caspian. Firstly, these produced a great deal of money. Secondly, the Caspian Sea had been Russian water for two hundred years, and that was a question of power. And the Soviets wanted power.

Negotiations were carried on in regard to the fishing rights. Teheran demanded all. Moscow demanded all. Millspaugh was opposed to any concession; he held out against the Soviet claims for years. But the Russians, thanks to their geographical and economic position, had at their disposal the means of bringing strong pressure to bear. They boycotted the whole of Iranian imports, with the exception of cotton which they needed badly. That was a severe blow, for at that time eighty to ninety per cent of Iranian exports went to Russia. On the other hand, the Soviets allowed no more Baku oil or petrol to go to Iran. This was another severe blow, for there were as yet no roads leading up from the south, from the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. Hence all the trucks in the north lay idle. And since the year 1925 brought a particularly bad harvest, the food problem in the capital was at times very acute.

How strongly pressure brought to bear by Russia affected the decisions of Teheran has not yet been officially determined. But the facts speak for themselves. In the summer of 1927 it had been planned that Millspaugh's contract, which had expired, should be renewed. The Government wished his powers to be restricted, thereby bringing his former independence to an end. Millspaugh refused. Hardly had he gone—to do as his predecessor Shuster did and write a book—when a comprehensive Agreement was concluded with Russia. The Caspian Sea fisheries were to be shared. The Russian gunboat was withdrawn from Enzeli, and the port was thereupon given the nationalist name of Pahlevi. A trade and Customs convention followed, the stipulations and provisions of which, according to an English observer in Teheran 'bear evidence of much bureaucratic manipulation in Moscow, and . . . leave a clear

field for all sorts of chicanery and backhandedness in the treatment of Persian merchants'.<sup>1</sup>

The Soviets, as is proved over and over again, are no less arbitrary than Tsarist Russia. Only their methods are less frank. The Shuster mission was turned out as a result of an open, in fact warlike, conflict with Russia. The Millspaugh mission went of its own accord, and perhaps it will never be possible to bring documentary evidence to prove a connection between its departure and the machinations of Moscow.

The light in which the whole episode appeared to the Shah may be seen in the trend of his policy during the last ten years—a compulsory extension of the Trans-Iranian Railway; the restoration of the old caravan route to Trebizond in order to make Iranian exports independent of Russia; the appointment of advisers from 'disinterested' countries such as Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark, with careful limitation of their powers; the dismissal of these advisers as soon as the first signs appeared that the newly trained Iranian officials might possibly tackle the work; the establishment of a commercial monopoly which, though it did not promote export trade, permitted of a control of imports and exports; industrialization of the country in the attempt to make it independent of outsiders. Many of these measures were criticized by foreign observers from the purely economic standpoint. They were in fact planned without regard to economic considerations, solely from the national point of view. Only the future can show whether the economic hardships that must necessarily follow will in the course of time produce a weakening of the country, even regarded from the national standpoint. The development of the army, which from being the most despised class in the country has become the most respected, has at least produced a feeling of internal and external security such as had not existed for centuries past.

The particular spirit that inspires the land of Iran and distinguishes it from its neighbours may be felt as soon as the frontier is crossed. A modest, pleasant Customs House stands in the Iraqi border town of Khanikin, with two Customs officers in plain clothes inside and an armed sentry outside. They cast

<sup>1</sup> Journal of the Central Asian Society, Vol. XV, 1928, p. 84.

one rapid, practised glance over passport and *carnet de passage*, a second over the luggage, and then the road is clear. On the Iranian side, on the other hand, behind the first line of brownish yellow hills stands a gigantic edifice, half palace, half fortress, surrounded by high thick walls and heavy iron chains between stone pillars. Innumerable immaculately uniformed officials rule over the great court, the vast Customs hall, and all the offices. Porters stand ready to carry into the hall every piece of luggage, from the bag containing the tent down to the tool-chest, and to empty every pocket of the car. Here the visitor sees for the first time the new Iranian determination to be respected by all the world, and he realizes that though it may be uncomfortable the length and thoroughness of the Customs investigation is only commensurate with the size of this magnificent Customs Palace.

A guide to Iran exists in English and French, but this fact is evidently unknown outside Iran, even in Baghdad. Indeed much too little news of the real development going on in this country is heard in foreign parts. In these circumstances, having neither Baedeker nor other guide, it is as well to have a second pair of eyes to aid one's own personal observation. Daniel, the chauffeur from Baghdad, could not, it is true, say whether the rock reliefs near Bisitun were of the Achaemenian period or of the Sassanian, but he knew the whole route. He had travelled it twelve years before in a lorry, and had been there again two years ago with a diplomatist and his wife. And while one's own eyes can only see what exists at the moment and what is therefore taken for granted, Daniel also saw the things which had not existed two years previously. By his exclamations of astonishment and admiration could be gauged the changes that had taken place in recent years, the rate at which Iran was being demolished and built up again, industrialized—in short, being made to progress. Daniel pointed out new canals which take the water from the River Diala and turn erstwhile dry hard ground into fruitful gardens. In one place he saw new, solidly built houses, in another a new part of a town, on a flat space to the right of the road a brand-new sugar-beet factory with smoking chimneys that had been in process of construction two years earlier. Daniel told fearsome tales of the high pass, Pai

Taq, that must be crossed on the road to Teheran—seventy-nine hairpin bends on one side, so sharp that it is impossible to take them in a single turn, so steep that once when he was driving his old-fashioned, chain-driven lorry he was unable to brake sufficiently and whizzed down with his head whirling. But behold! We drove up the Pai Taq and down again—and the road was wider and easier than many a famous Alpine pass. The suburbs of Hamadan are so new that Daniel lost his way. Teheran had changed so much that Daniel hardly knew where he was. 'They build something new every day,' he said admiringly. 'Not slowly as they do in Iraq, very quick, very modern.' For Daniel is one of those who want to be ahead of Europe by to-morrow if possible.

Once Teheran was surrounded by a moat and the way into the town was guarded by beautiful old tiled gates. The moat has disappeared, the gates have been pulled down, wide streets have been cut through from north to south and from west to east and have turned the picturesque old city of Teheran into an asphalted modern metropolis. Imposing buildings are being put up according to a definite scheme, and if private enterprise attempts to scatter little residential suburbs north of the town, where the freshest water runs down from the hills, an imperial decree soon puts an end to such presumption. The northern boundary of the city has been fixed, and anything that has grown up beyond it, whether large or small, is being demolished. Two-storied houses will be put up in place of one-storied. The pleasant privacy of single-family houses will soon be at an end.

A careful mother buys shoes a size too large for her rapidly growing family and puts wide turnings into the seams of their clothes. Shah Rheza is planning the reconstruction of the State of Iran on the same principle. Everything that is being built to-day is adapted for expansion. Teheran's magnificent railway station, for example, only serves very few trains at present; a much smaller one would have done. But its proportions have been planned for the time when the transit traffic of persons and goods between the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea shall have developed to the extent anticipated.

Shah Rheza may lag behind his neighbours the Turks in certain branches of modernization—such as the introduction of

European clothes and hats and the abolition of the veil—but in the impetuosity with which he has centralized the State, Iran has for a long time been ahead of Turkey. The reasons for this are various. For one thing, nineteenth-century Persia was even less up to date than Turkey. Hence there was less need for adjustment with what already existed; the new development could start from first principles and proceed much more radically. Moreover, all classes of the population of Iran regard their ruler with an enormous veneration, with an almost religious awe which causes large parcels of once private property to be given into the hands of His Majesty for the welfare of the State, almost before he thinks of asking for them. Shah Rhesa could probably repeat Louis XIV's proud phrase with more right than any living ruler: 'L'état c'est moi.' He is in very truth the embodiment of the will of the State, the motive power behind everything that happens. Ministers may come and go in rapid succession. They are only names. The Shah is the head and the will to direct and order all things.

If differences of degree are to be found between Turkey and Iran in the thorough-goingness of the reconstruction and in the intensiveness of the application of the authoritarian principle, there are other points in the work of national reform in which the paths of the two States diverge completely. While Kemal Atatürk expended immense energy in inducing the adaptation of the Latin characters to the Turkish language and thereby effected not only easier intercourse with Europe but also considerable moderation of difficulties in all branches of life, there has since 15th March 1938 not been a single word in Latin characters to be seen in the streets of Iran. Advertisements for soap flakes, for photographic materials, for knitted goods, which have gradually become the common property of Europe and America, of Asia and Africa, can only be discovered in the busy commercial streets of Teheran by one who can read Iranian. And even in an hotel that caters only for Europeans the numbers of all the rooms must be written in Iranian figures.

The intensity of the newly awakened nationalist feeling that, in addition to the dominant personality of the Shah, is the motive power in the State, and the anti-European tendency which pursues the foreigner at every turn in Teheran, are

shown by this determined adherence to all things Iranian. Briefly put—where Europeanism is solely a matter of technical skill it is simply appropriated; but where it touches the philosophy of life, the newly awakened State is anxious to keep clear of foreign influence and reverts to the purely Iranian. The old style calendar has been retained and the whole empire reckons this year (1939) as the year 1317. While in Baghdad—not always successfully—and in Angora—with excellent results—European architecture preponderates in the newer sections of the towns, the great new Government buildings of Teheran have usually been modelled upon the magnificent old Iranian styles. Reliefs after the fashion of the sculptures of Persepolis adorn the plinths and façades of Ministries and Banks. Wherever possible, foreign specialists are replaced by Iranians. One after another, the telegraph service, the harbour boards, the lighting system, the National Bank, were brought under Iranian administration.

After the reorganization of the well-equipped, efficient army, the greatest achievement of the new State is the elaboration of the network of roads. In 1925 when Shah Rheza came to the throne, there were barely twelve hundred miles of usable road. To-day that mileage has been increased tenfold. Yet the difficulties of building roads that will withstand the weather conditions in the mountainous parts are almost insuperable. Bridges of quite disproportionate size must be built across streams that are dry in the summer in order that they may resist the force of the spate in springtime. The latest show-piece of Iranian road engineering—the Chalus Road—leading from Teheran through the Elbruz Mountains, was taken for miles through tunnels to make winter traffic possible. Workmen are continuously employed in repairing the roads, and though ruts are unavoidable in certain parts that are much used by heavy lorries, the Iranian roads together with those of Syria may be said to be the best among all the roads of the Near East.

The railways in Persia were in an even more sorry state than the roads after the World War. Apart from the end section of an Indian railway that ran through Baluchistan for about another eighty miles westwards across the Persian frontier, and the Mesopotamian line between Baghdad and Khanikin opposite, the terminus of which was also upon Iranian soil, the only

railway line was in the north, connecting Tabriz with Russia. During the War a branch line from this was built over Persian territory, but it is derelict now. All in all, there were hardly more than two hundred miles of railroad in Persia. They did not even connect up different parts of the country, but were only intruders from abroad into the outlying portions of the land, north, west, and south.

If cross-country connections were to be established throughout the great empire, there was the choice of a line running east and west, which would have provided communication between Europe and India, and a line running north and south from the Caspian to the Persian Gulf. The latter was decided upon. The very awkward middle portion of the line in the mountainous region of Burujird was completed in the summer of 1938, so that the eight hundred odd miles of railway line could be inaugurated. The history of the rails used for the central part shows the use to which the north to south section will be put. Since the transport of these heavy goods from the south across the mountain ranges would have been too difficult and expensive, the rails were carried by the shortest way through Russia. The Soviets, however, have their own views about the handling of transit goods, and were not inclined to favour the new railroad. 'Technical difficulties' in the Customs caused delays that lasted for months, until the men in charge of the construction decided after all to send the material round by Bender Shahpur, the southern terminus of the railway. It was therefore taken northwards first over the finished part of the line and then by means of lorries. This example shows that the ambitious railway scheme is being pursued less for purely economic reasons than for political purposes, and in order to make Iran more independent of its northern neighbour.

The six-hundred-mile run to Ispahan and back is called an 'excursion' in Teheran. Such terminology is possible only in a vast empire of the dimensions of Iran. To make a comparison, it is as though it were a trip from Berlin to Munich or Vienna, from the capital representing national unity, industrialism, and military discipline, back into the baroque age, to art, culture, and a happy, balanced life. In modern times, when more stress

is laid upon ability and success than upon the humanities, the north has in many places been victorious over the south—Milan and Turin over Naples; Berlin over Munich and Vienna; Teheran over Ispahan and Shiraz. Nevertheless, in all the easier-going, southern cities something of the real essence of the nation lies concentrated, and remains of value to the north even if only as a contrast.

The way from Teheran to Ispahan does not run through populous regions, but through desolate and uninhabited hilly districts. The fertile parts of Iran have from olden times been on the outskirts of the empire, along the shores of the Caspian, in the western mountains, in the fruitful plains of what was once called Elam, later Arabistan, and now Kuzistan, along the Persian Gulf, and in Seistan. In the centre is the 'dead heart of Persia', the great salt desert of Lut, a waterless plateau, one dry stone ridge of hills behind another. Anywhere where water comes down from the mountains on the periphery, there are green patches, and where there is a green patch there is also a town. But most of the streams have not the strength to work their way through beneath the torrid sun to a second stream or as far as the ocean. They ooze away in salty swamps. Teheran's water comes from the mountains in the north, from the Elbruz range; Ispahan's from the south-west, from the high, desolate, Bactrian hills.

From Teheran the road runs due south past the salt lake Daria-i-Namak that gleams beneath the hot morning sun like faint mother-of-pearl. Crumbling lines of hills, beautiful in shape, appear on the skyline. And from the southern edge of these hills the view runs far across the plain to a glittering golden point on the horizon. The road runs straight as an arrow towards this point. Right and left green patches are added to the gold. Houses and the shadows cast by houses grow to be recognizable. The golden point takes on form. It is the huge gold-covered cupola of the Mosque of Qum. And Qum, together with Meshed far away in the east, is the holiest city of the Shiites of Iran.

The travellers' thoughts return from Qum to Kazimain, to the sacred mosque of the Shiites north of Baghdad. There there are two cupolas blazing and dazzling to the eye. They shrink before this one huge golden dome visible from afar above all the



walls. Remembering the fanaticism of the faithful in Kazimain and some recent outbreaks of Shiite popular fury in Meshed, the visitor to Qum presses his nose inquisitively but very cautiously against the wooden lattice in the shady vestibule that gives a view into the courtyard of the mosque, and is prepared to be turned out of the sacred precincts at any moment. Instead of which, a pleasantly smiling young man appears, and takes the strangers into the courtyard, right underneath the minarets and the cupola, into some of the anterooms of the mosque which have been turned into a charming little museum of Iranian art. Nothing—not even the unveiling of women—is more indicative of the great change that has occurred in Iran than the fact that to-day two ‘dogs of Christians’ may wander unmolested in the courtyard of the mosque at Qum, and the fact that religious objects have become museum pieces. The power of a reactionary priesthood has been broken. And though it may be that pious persons in the courtyard of the mosque still resist the innovation in their hearts, nothing of this appears externally.

While a busy throng with grave, intent faces, hurries along the great asphalted dazzlingly sunny streets of Teheran, the wide old main streets of Ispahan are planted with four rows of tall trees, broken sunlight filters through the leaves, a cheerful, gaily dressed crowd saunters along the firm yet resilient surface. In Teheran nearly all the buildings keep to a uniform business-like natural tone. The houses of Ispahan, on the other hand, flaunt the most enchanting colours on either side of the avenues—pale pink, a delicate blue—over the doors and windows are arched masses of stucco work; wide, sociable balconies above the workshops of silversmiths and cloth-printers—the whole scene one of lightness and joyousness. The green-blue and golden mosques, the cupolas and minarets and medersahs, the palaces of the Shah the verandas of which are raised upon pillars, the gardens with their fountains and silvery-grey poplars, the bridges with their arched roofs and frescoed pavilions, the wonderful City Square where polo used to be played—all this has over and over again been described in poem and song for the last three hundred years.

But Ispahan is not a town like Carcassonne or San Gimignano or Rothenburg that slumbers amid dreams of past glories, a

museum for foreign visitors. Ispahan is living, growing, making money. The new factories, it is true, have not been set down within the old precincts of the city, but have been erected in a new part on the other side of the river. These factories have been built under the direction of a first-rate architect in the traditional Persian style; and the decorative faculty of the people of Ispahan is shown in the embellishment of the chimneys, the blue-green mosaics of which make them seem like modern counterparts of the minarets on the other bank of the river. The great love that Iranians have for flowers and gardens is shown even here amid purely industrial and utilitarian buildings—beautifully laid-out beds of flowers among the factory buildings, little murmuring streams, young green trees. There are nine factories all in a row, all of them for spinning and weaving silk, wool, and cotton. A tenth textile factory lies thirty miles out of Ispahan. A paper-mill, which will use up the by-products, is in process of erection. Germans and Iranians work together most satisfactorily. Schünemann, one of the leaders in the guerrilla warfare during the World War, has returned to the country that became his second home many years ago. The newest factories still have German foremen, but in the older ones all the work including the repairing of machinery is excellently carried out by native work-people.

In other parts of Iran almost all new enterprises are initiated by the State and most of the companies are financed up to ninety-five per cent by the State and occupy monopoly positions. In Ispahan conditions have hitherto been so favourable that State intervention has not been necessary. The whole of the textile industry has been built up by private initiative. Nevertheless, the more systematically the country is organized by the central authorities, the more difficult it will be for private enterprises to hold their own in their present form. All provinces must be treated alike in the process of reorganization. Those who have forged ahead will have to help their slower brethren.

One of the chief difficulties to be overcome is the lack of trained workmen. This deficiency is being tackled most energetically. Twenty years ago one-third of the Iranian population was still nomadic. To-day houses have taken the place of the black tents,

Shepherds have become farmers and agricultural labourers. Now that for the first time for centuries there is no danger of thieves, cattle need but few herdsman. The transition from agricultural work to industrial is, however, less easy. Hence towns such as Tabriz and Ispahan which have a long industrial tradition behind them have the advantage. If, therefore, the new textile factories set up by the Shah in the fertile agricultural provinces of Mazenderan on the Caspian Sea are short of skilled workers, the only thing to do is to spread out the existing number of skilled men. The knowledge and experience of the Ispahan work-people are transferred to the north. And this redistribution implies not merely a necessary adjustment for the purposes of industry but at the same time a profound change in the mode of life. The people of Ispahan are taken from a height of over five thousand feet above sea-level and established in the damp sub-tropical climate of the sea-coast. Not all of them can stand the change. Nevertheless, the textile machinery that is set going in Mazenderan is considered to make up for that which has temporarily come to a standstill in Ispahan. The country with its thirteen million inhabitants is growing more homogeneous.

A journey to Ispahan as also a visit to the State model factories in the north is like so many variations on the single great theme that is treated in the permanent exhibition of all the country's produce at Ispahan. It should be remarked that the word 'permanent' does not imply 'unchanging'. Extension of production is continually being recorded, and the figures for the area of land newly brought under cultivation increased. This exhibition is as it were a statement of accounts of Iran's achievements. There is a festive air about it. Flags wave in the courtyard in front of the exhibition building. There are thick carpets on the floors of the reception and exhibition rooms. Throngs of visitors—native as well as foreign—stand in astonishment before miniature cotton plantations, plans of factories, pictures illustrating tobacco production, graphs showing a continually rising curve. The most important categories are cotton, wool, silk, rice, opium, grain, and all the produce of cattle farming. Dried fruits occupy a special place in the exhibition as in the export trade; in the exhibition because they lend themselves to a quaint sort of artistic display by reason of the variety in their colours—

ancient Iranian reliefs as well as Persian miniatures may be seen made in apricots, figs, raisins, sultanas and pears.

The aim of all these efforts is to bring about as wide as possible an economic independence. For the present the import of machinery and finished goods must be paid for by the export of agricultural produce. The greater the cultivated area, the more intensive the methods, the greater will be the volume of such imports, for which there is at present an almost unlimited power of consumption. It is obvious that with things as they are, two states like Germany and Iran complement one another perfectly. Each has precisely what the other lacks. Moreover, private enterprise in the Western democracies is still to some extent reluctant to risk investing money in Iran since the failure of the Millspaugh mission. That is the reason why Germany has moved from the fifth place to the second in the statistics of Iranian imports and exports since the Clearing Agreement was signed in 1935. Some means of adjustment, so both sides hope, will be found for any lopsidedness in the working out of the Agreement, due to the small volume of Iranian exports which cannot yet keep pace with German imports. The first signs of change in the type of imports required are already observable. Hitherto German goods and German quality in the form of sewing-machines and electric irons and chemicals have found a market in every home and branch of industry. Germany served more especially the so-called 'bazaar trade', and had thousands of satisfied customers. But now, since the building of the Trans-Iranian Railway has been completed, the authorities in both states have concentrated on the building of blast furnaces and steelworks, while the 'bazaar trade' is treated as of secondary importance. The first tentative step towards the foundation of heavy industry has been taken.

This fact and the completion of the railway have once more brought into the foreground the question of Iranian mineral wealth. In the very earliest known historical times there were two centres for the production of metals in the civilized world—Elam and eastern Persia, both to-day included in Iran. Later on Babylon and Egypt also worked the Sinai peninsula. Nevertheless, all later attempts to exploit the Persian mines have proved unremunerative. Even Shah Abbas, the creator of

Ispahan, whose labourers worked for nothing, found that the costs outran the profits. In the seventeenth century a Frenchman mentioned as proverbial 'the silver mines of Kerven, where they spend ten to gain nine'. And the English Mining Corporation in the nineteenth century, though it found any quantity of minerals, could not make anything out of them owing to lack of means of transport and fuel. Nevertheless Sir Percy Sykes wrote years ago: 'If Persia were opened up by railways, it is probable that mines which are now quite valueless would become remunerative and would contribute to the prosperity of the country.'<sup>1</sup>

This is the stage which we have reached to-day. The railway was ten years building and was completed in 1938. In the neighbourhood of Anarek an Ispahan engineering firm has done extensive pioneer work, a mining law has been passed by the Government, the Department for Industry and Mining has been expanded into a Ministry during the past year, and a Government mining company has taken over the exploitation of the first concession for nickel and copper. Only the question whether—and if so which—foreign States should have any share in them does not appear to have been finally settled.

So the circle is being completed; and modern Iran may boast that it is taking up again the traditions of its ancestors after six thousand years, of the ancestors who mined metals not because they thought of profits or were avid of dividends, but because they needed the metals in order to be powerful over against their neighbours.

<sup>1</sup> Sykes, *History of Persia*: Vol. I, p. 55.

## VI

### THE ARABIC WORLD

*'I never regard, of course, any political question as being settled, either by the delimitation of Boundary Commissions or anything else. . . .'*

[THE RT.-HON. VISCOUNT PEEL, IN 1925]

IT lies in the very nature of war itself that the men who conduct it are at the outset looked upon by politicians merely as subordinate technical employees. Their job is to find out—by going to war—which party is the stronger, once the politicians have ceased to be of one mind on the subject. But as technical experts the choice of ways and means must be left to them, and that is why during the course of a war they advance imperceptibly from being mechanics and technical employees to being masters of the whole enterprise. In spite of this, the restricted character of their actual task remains the same—to achieve victory or, in other words, to prove by fighting the superiority of their country's strength over the enemy's. It is not for them to think what form peace shall take. For that reason they are wholly unfettered in their choice of means—not only of military, but in the course of time also of political weapons. Herein lies the root of the celebrated and tragic conflict between policy and the conduct of war. It is also the cause of the imperfection and instability of so many peace treaties. For after a war is over, the statesmen are bound by the actions of their military advisers as well as by the promises they made to their peoples at home to rouse them to ready and willing participation in the war.

This characteristic of war made itself felt in the Near East as well as in Europe. The primary objective of the Allies was the defeat of Germany and Turkey. The means used to achieve this aim were: the promise of independence to the Arabs; the promise of a Jewish National Home to the Zionists. And from

the necessity for presenting some tangible result to the people at home arose the decision to divide the rich provinces of Syria and Mesopotamia between France and England.

The exact interpretation of the agreement with the Arabs has given rise to many controversies in recent years. There is the case of the letters exchanged in 1916 between the acting High Commissioner in Egypt, Sir Henry MacMahon, and the Shereef Hussein of Mecca. Does the Arab text correspond exactly with the English version? Was Palestine included in 'independent Arabia' or not? Since these questions were first set down a special committee of the Palestine Conference of February–March 1939 has considered them, and the British and the Arabs have agreed to differ in their interpretation of the Arab text.

Another example is furnished by the agreement concluded between Hussein's son, the Emir Feisal, and the Zionist leader, Chaim Weizman, with Lawrence's aid. The text was not published until after Lawrence's death. The Arabic and Hebrew texts contradict each other. And Lawrence is no longer alive to say which is the true version.

Whatever may have been promised as a means of furthering victory, the real war-aim of the two Great Powers France and England was certainly the occupation of those countries that—through the pre-War method of 'peaceful penetration'—had already come to form a part of their respective zones of influence: for England the hinterland of the Persian Gulf and the Suez Canal, if possible with a line of communication between them; for France Syria and its hinterland. France, however, did not contemplate granting any independence. To have done so would not have accorded with the French mentality. The French, unlike the English, never seek to allow their subject peoples to follow their own line of development, aided by civilizational and administrative support from the governing Power. On the contrary their strength, for good as for evil, lies in their capacity for assimilating them. 'First become French' is their guiding principle, 'and as a Frenchman you will be free'. Among the English there existed differences of opinion between those like Lawrence and Philby who had worked with the Arabs and urged the conferment upon them of real independence, those—mostly Liberals—who demanded annexation pure and

simple, and those who wanted the setting-up of some form of protectorate.

Meanwhile Anglo-French relations steadily deteriorated. The two countries had been united by military necessity and under the pressure of war. At the close of the war all the mutual grievances and friction that had hitherto been suppressed came to the surface. The French thought that the promises made by England to the Shereef of Mecca were ridiculous and merely a pretext for not surrendering Syria. On the subject of the embittered feelings entertained by French officers towards England and Greece the Parisian publicist, Gauvain, wrote:

They were angry with these two countries because the British General Staff never showed any willingness to co-operate with us in the Balkans, and also on account of the treachery of Constantine's army. As a consequence of serving under General Sarraïl, an embittered and prejudiced man, these officers came to share his prejudices and dislikes. In their talks with Serbs and Bulgars they advised them to attack first Salonica and then Kavalla. In their letters to their friends and relatives in France they compared our Allies unfavourably with the 'good old Turks', whose chivalrous conduct at the Dardanelles they praised.

The English, on the other hand, who thought that they had conquered Syria either alone or with Arab assistance, were exasperated because the Sykes-Picot Agreement obliged them to compel their ally the Shereef Hussein to 'abstain from actions inimical to the French and to prevent his followers and co-racials in Syria from rebelling against French rule. In Constantinople, which was for a long time mistakenly looked upon as the key-position in the Near East, a continuous subterranean struggle for supremacy went on. The armistice of Mudania was concluded by England against the will of France, who reproached her with a desire to achieve predominance in Turkey. But France returned tit for tat when she sent Franklin-Bouillon to Angora to make a treaty of peace.

A single menace was serious enough to unite the dissonant partners for a short time—the coming of Woodrow Wilson and his Fourteen Points. One thing was perfectly clear to both—the realization of the Fourteen Points meant the disappearance of all hopes of annexation, protectorates, or even spheres of



influence. France and England, therefore, united in issuing a proclamation with the twofold object of gaining President Wilson's approval and of pacifying—at least for the time being—the peoples who had been moved to resistance. As for the future development of events, the two Great Powers trusted—and trusted rightly—to their diplomatic skill. The proclamation of 8th November 1918, ran as follows:

The end which France and Great Britain have in view in their prosecution in the East of the war let loose by German ambition is the complete and definite liberation of the peoples so long oppressed by Turks and the establishment of national Governments and Administrations drawing their authority from the initiative and free choice of indigenous populations.

In order to give effect to these intentions France and Great Britain are agreed to encourage and assist in the establishment of indigenous Governments and Administrations in Syria and Mesopotamia, which have already in fact been liberated by the Allies, and in countries whose liberation they are endeavouring to effect, and to recognize the latter as soon as they shall be effectively established. Far from wishing to impose any particular institution on these lands, they have no other care but to assure by their support and effective aid the normal working of the Governments and Administrations, which they shall have adopted of their free will. To ensure impartial and equal justice, to facilitate economic developments by evoking and encouraging indigenous initiative, to foster the spread of education and to put an end to the divisions too long exploited by Turkish policy—such is the role which the two Allied Governments assume in the liberated territories.<sup>1</sup>

This declaration was published not only in Paris, London, and New York, but also in the chief cities of the Arab world. It is perfectly clear and unmistakable. It is not necessary to enter into any controversy over the interpretation of the MacMahon-Hussein or the Feisal-Weizman correspondence in order to understand the exact nature of the promises which it contains.

It was inevitable that the Allies should find it more difficult to reconcile these promises with their real intentions as expressed in ratified and internationally binding treaties. At the Peace Conference in Paris the settlement of the Arab question was adjourned from month to month. The Emir Feisal came and

<sup>1</sup> *Anglo-French Agreement, November 8th, 1918.*

pleaded his cause and then went away again. T. E. Lawrence constituted himself his champion and grew thoroughly morose in this atmosphere of intrigue. Woodrow Wilson became daily more and more weary. His Points, like the individual threads in a magic skein, lost all relation to each other through being pulled to pieces. Each piece was seized upon by some one, tested, and thrown away, until all the pieces lay strewn about and worthless. All that remained in the end was a solid residue combining filaments of French dogmatism and English imperial interests. Nevertheless Wilson roused himself once more in the Arab question and sought to rescue at least a part, if not the whole. Harold Nicolson, who was in Paris working on the problem and who knew everything, has told, in his own words, what happened:

The dispute culminated at a meeting which took place in the Rue Nitot on 20th March 1919. Mr. Lloyd George stated that if Damascus, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo were included in the sphere of direct French administration, then the British would have broken faith with the Arabs. Lord Allenby, who was also present, went further. He expressed the view that if the French were imposed upon an unwilling Syria, 'there would be trouble, and even war'. M. Pichon said that France could not release Great Britain from the terms of a solemn agreement merely because those terms conflicted with previous obligations entered into with a third party, of which obligations France had not been informed at the time. President Wilson (and it was almost the last occasion on which he stood by his principles) said that it was a matter of complete indifference to him what France and Great Britain had decided in the form of Secret Treaty: they had since then accepted the Fourteen Points: they were thus obliged, whatever their previous engagements, to consider only the wishes of the populations concerned: there was some doubt about these wishes: according to M. Chukri Ganem (a Syriac poet of Paris, who, although he had not set foot in Syria for twenty years, had been produced by M. Pichon as the spokesman of the Syrian Arabs) the whole heart of Syria was pulsating with but one hope—that of a French mandate: according to the Emir Feisal the Syrians had no partiality for anything other than their own independence: these divergencies could only be reconciled by an 'Enquiry'. Somewhat reluctantly the assembled delegates agreed to a Commission of Enquiry. Mr. King and Mr. Crane were, in fact, despatched to the Middle East in the month of July. Their report, when eventually received, was a highly inconvenient document. But by that time President Wil-

son had left Paris for his final collapse. And the King-Crane report was buried under the dust of subsequent diplomacy.<sup>1</sup>

The diplomats sought a formula that would outwardly bridge over the differences. Wilson's principle of self-determination was incorporated in the mandate system. But, whereas the former German colonies were grouped in one category as Class B mandates to which there was hardly even the intention of applying the right of self-determination, the Arab nations were classified as 'A' mandates, that is to say they were placed under the guardianship of a Great Power that was intended, like any other form of guardianship, to give place eventually to the independence of the ward. By this means the promise of Arab independence was kept, at least within certain limits. Finally, the mandates were divided up territorially in accordance with the various secret agreements. Everything therefore appeared to be in the most beautiful order from the standpoints of London and Paris as well as of Egypt and India. Nevertheless this 'beautiful' order was disturbed by certain independent movements within the Arab world. These words are not to be understood merely as revolts within the mandated territories. The bad government of individual Arab rulers, and also the emergence of a ruler whose existence was entirely overlooked during the course of the negotiations and in the drafting of the regulations, were, because they were unforeseen, of even more fateful import.

The ironic element in the situation lay in the fact that England had completely overlooked and ignored a man whose existence was known to her. The French had probably never heard of him. He is known in Europe under the name of ibn Saud. In his own dominion he is called Abd-ul-Aziz.

If it is remembered that the treaty makers had never set foot in the Arabic countries whose fate they were deciding, and that they were concerned solely with the former provinces of the Ottoman empire, the oversight is to some extent understandable. Apart from Syria and Mesopotamia, these countries were the border districts of the Arabian peninsula. Nobody had ever reached the centre of the peninsula. Even the Romans, notwithstanding their thoroughness, had only made a single—and unsuccessful—attempt to advance into the interior. Since the

<sup>1</sup> Harold Nicolson: *Peacemaking*, 1919, pp. 142-4.

failure of that attempt the hinterland had for two thousand years remained free from all contact with the outer world. For the Turks contented themselves with occupying the border provinces. In making their pre-war agreements with the Arabs the English followed in Turkish footsteps. From Egypt, negotiations were carried on with Mecca, and from the British protectorate of Aden with Yemen Assur, and the petty sultanates on the southern coastline. Similarly it was from the Persian Gulf that England negotiated with the sheikhs of the Arabian coast.

Nevertheless ibn Saud was not wholly unknown. As a young man towards the end of the nineteenth century he was a refugee in Koweit because the ruler of the Shammar, Sultan ibn Rashid of Hail, had conquered the dominions of the Saudi dynasty. In alliance with the Turks and the Germans, ibn Rashid appeared too powerful and too dangerous to English eyes. Hence England gave the young ibn Saud money in order that he might wage war against his ancestral enemy. Ibn Saud disappeared into the interior and won back his native city of Riad. Twelve years later he reappeared on the frontier and conquered the coastal province of El Hasa (1912). After his victory England concluded the customary treaty with him, and thenceforward ibn Saud was numbered among the numerous treaty-sheikhs.

Individual Englishmen recognized his importance even before the World War. On her journey into the interior Gertrude Bell only succeeded in getting as far as Hail, the capital of ibn Saud's opponent. Nevertheless even there she learned enough to write in *The Times* of 13th June 1914:

My belief is that ibn Sa'ud is now the chief figure in Central Arabia, although the Ottoman Government was still pursuing its traditional policy of subsidizing and supplying arms to the Rashids. Captain Shakespear will be able to give us more certain information as to the relative positions of the protagonists.'

Ill luck, however, dogged the English footsteps. Captain Shakespear, who made his way into the interior to ibn Saud and won his friendship, was accidentally killed by a bullet in the course of a minor war between ibn Saud and ibn Rashid. The next Englishman to penetrate into the interior of the country in 1917 was Ronald Storrs, who had started the revolt in the desert from Cairo and whose perfect courtesy and fluent

Arabic enabled him to negotiate with and win the Arabs over to his side. Bad luck also pursued him. For the caravan with which he was to journey into the desert arrived late and ill equipped, the season was already too far advanced, and after being smitten with sunstroke he was forced to return.

It thus came about that notwithstanding multifarious English activities among the Arab sheikhs and princes in the interior of Arabia a State evolved into independent existence without British co-operation before the mandatory system began to operate—the State of Nejd under the rule of ibn Saud.

### THE ARABIAN PENINSULA

Ever since we entered the Caliphate cities of Baghdad and Damascus in company with the Omayyad and Abbassid caliphs who succeeded Mahomet, we have left Arabia to itself. In the course of thirteen centuries Arabia has undergone little change. It is still divided up among numbers of tribes, its towns still live on what little there is in the way of trade and commerce, and the inhabitants of Mecca and Medina subsist upon the exploitation of pious pilgrims. The Bedouin still raise their herds of camels, asses, and sheep, and augment their resources by raiding. Pastures are still few and far between. The surplus population either perishes or emigrates into the borderlands, into Syria, Mesopotamia, and the Yemen, introducing fresh and invigorating Arab blood into those parts.

Several religious sects have made their appearance. There is a particular sect of Shiites who claim to be derived from a descendant of Hussein called Zeid, and whose chief is the Imâm of Yemen. There is a Sunnite sect known as Shafai. The Zeidi and the Shafai have as neighbours an Ismaili colony. No love is lost between them all. At the beginning of the eighteenth century a man named ibn Abd-el-Wahab attempted to reform Islam and to restore it to its original purity. His followers were derisively called Wahabites. Two centuries later they formed the backbone of ibn Saud's new State.

A sort of system of States was evolved in the course of time. That is perhaps almost an exaggeration. For there was no real continuity in these States, and still less any definite frontiers.

In the hilly and fertile south-western parts, however, that the Romans called 'Arabia Felix', a district known as Yemen gradually became distinguishable. One of its neighbours was the principality of Assir, the ruler of which was descended from Mulay Idriss, who had emigrated to Morocco many centuries before and who is revered there as a saint to this day. For this reason he is known as Prince Idrissi. The pilgrimage towns of Mecca and Medina, and the pilgrims' port of Jidda, formed the centre of a clearly marked administrative district known as the Hejaz. For seven centuries—with the usual interruptions, of course—the Hejaz was ruled over by a dynasty which traced its ancestry back to a certain Qatâta who was a descendant of Ali. The various members of this family, to-day as in the days of Mahomet's great-grandfather, are continually at loggerheads with one another over the distribution of the revenues obtained from pilgrims. In Europe they are commonly known as Hashemites. The Shereef Hussein is one of them.

In the centre of Arabia lies the country of Nejd. At the beginning of the eighteenth century a prince named Mahomet ibn Saud played the same part in relation to the religious reformer Abd-el-Wahab that Maurice of Saxony once played towards Luther. He protected him from his persecutors. He made his religion a State religion because this—originally—simple faith accorded with the customs and ideas of the inhabitants of Nejd. A century later one of Mahomet ibn Saud's descendants conquered the whole of central Arabia from the Red Sea to the Persian Gulf. He was overthrown in his turn by Egyptian invaders.

In the north of Nejd there are certain powerful tribes such as the Shammar and the Ruwalla. Their pastures extend to Transjordan and Syria. They alternate between mutual alliance and hostility.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century Egypt experienced a period of great progress under Mehemet Ali's rule. Mehemet Ali's son conquered not only Syria and Cilicia but also the whole west coast of Arabia as far down as Yemen. His success was not popular in England, and she helped the Turks to defeat Mehemet Ali. The Turks thereupon made themselves masters of Arabia, over which they had formally held suzerainty for centuries. The

Hejaz was transformed into a vilayet and a Turkish vali sat beside the Shereef of Mecca as Governor. After a series of campaigns Yemen was also conquered. In the twentieth century, however, it largely regained its independence.

At the outbreak of the World War England found herself limited in her choice of allies. The Shammar under ibn Rashid took Turkey's side. The Imâm of Yemen, faithful to his treaty obligations to Constantinople, remained neutral. The lesser sultans and sheikhs of the coastal districts were of no importance. Thus there remained the Shereef Hussein of Mecca, a man of sixty-six and father of four sons, and the Sultan ibn Saud. England's choice fell upon Hussein. A great controversy has raged in England over this decision ever since. The opposition between the supporters of Hussein and the supporters of ibn Saud was as bitter as in other days that between the adherents of Wagner and those of Brahms. In the formulation of policy Hussein's party gained the upper hand. Ibn Saud's followers—they consisted of only two or three men—were nevertheless ultimately proved right when their hero triumphed not only over Hussein but also over the British Government's policy.

At the outset of the War no other choice was—practically speaking—possible; and it was only after the Armistice that the British Government displayed an amazing incapacity. At first the circumstances were as follows: The Indian Government was profoundly shocked that its emissary to ibn Saud—he was also British Resident in Koweit—lost his life. The Indian Government wished to have nothing further to do with these disorderly Arabs, and graciously handed over the whole affair to the British Government in Egypt. As regards its own sphere of influence, the Arab States on the Persian Gulf, the Indian Government had only one desire—peace. Accordingly Sir Percy Cox negotiated with ibn Saud in 1915 and obtained a promise of neutrality in return for a monthly subsidy of five thousand pounds.

Lord Kitchener was in Egypt at this time. In common with other experts in Cairo, Kitchener had really never heard of any but the Shereefian family among all the Arab ruling families in Mecca. Before the War negotiations were constantly carried on between Cairo and Mecca, arising out of a quarrel between

the Arabs and the Egyptian Government over the pilgrims. On the other hand, officials in Cairo had never had anything to do with the inhabitants of eastern Arabia. Hence it was easy for them to make up their minds. Negotiations with Hussein were initiated. Not that anybody entertained any illusions on the subject of Hussein as an ally. He extorted all the money he could and only kept his promises when it suited him. He plundered the pilgrims and allowed the hostels erected for their benefit to fall into disrepair. He was nominated Shereef by the Young Turk Party in 1908, in place of his cousin Ali, after having learnt in Constantinople that no administration is free from corruption. For himself he installed a telephone and a wireless station and maintained three motor-cars. For his people he did nothing whatever. He was an autocrat even before he grew arrogant as a result of the British Government's flattery and subsidies.

Doubts were also entertained regarding his four sons—Ali, Abdullah, Zeid, and Feisal. Lawrence went to choose the most suitable one for his campaign. His opinion was:

The first, the Sherif of Mecca, we knew to be aged. I found Abdulla too clever, Ali too clean, Zeid too cool. Then I rode up-country to Feisal, and found in him the leader with the necessary fire, and yet with reason to give effect to our science.<sup>1</sup>

The subsequent careers of the four sons justified Lawrence's verdict. If a Hashemite had to be chosen, Feisal was the best; and, as was shown both during the campaign and also during his government of Iraq, he was good even when judged by absolute standards.

At the end of the War the Shereefian family at Mecca—thanks to England's support—had acquired an overwhelming predominance, whilst ibn Saud had been compelled to remain idle throughout the War by reason of his promise of neutrality made to Sir Percy Cox. A minor quarrel nevertheless did break out between ibn Saud and the Hejaz. It was nothing more than the kind of dispute that might occur any day among the Bedouin, and it would never have become an international 'incident' or led to the downfall of the Hashemites if it had not been that England intervened. The inhabitants of the oasis of Khurma

<sup>1</sup> T. E. Lawrence: *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, p. 8.



had heard of the abundant supplies of English money and had entered the War on Hussein's side. Their chief was, however, insulted by Hussein and withdrew himself and his followers from Hussein's army. Hussein resolved upon a punitive expedition. The chief and his people, who were Wahabites, asked ibn Saud for help. Before ibn Saud had come to any decision Hussein's troops had already been repulsed by the brave inhabitants of Khurma. A second attack also ended in defeat. Every one was delighted. Hussein was furious. But England was afraid of nothing so much as of an open conflict between ibn Saud and Hussein. In 1918 Philby visited ibn Saud for the purpose of restraining him from any act of hostility against Hussein. Ibn Saud found himself on the horns of a dilemma. He was determined not to forgo his English subsidy. At the same time he could not leave the inhabitants of Khurma to their fate. He therefore promised to abstain from hostilities on condition that England should compel Hussein to do the same.

In 1919 the Shereefian family became even more powerful. Feisal was ruling in Damascus. Abdullah hoped to obtain Iraq. Hussein reigned over the Hejaz. England's policy was based on the strengthening of the Hashemite rule. Lord Curzon, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, summoned a ministerial conference composed of representatives of the India Office and the War Office, the Admiralty and the Treasury. Philby was the only man in London who knew ibn Saud. He was summoned to the conference. He found himself opposed to the other members of the conference on every question. Curzon announced that 'our policy is a pro-Hussein policy'. The War Office was convinced of Hussein's military superiority. It was decided to tell ibn Saud that he must cede the oasis of Khurma to Hussein. If he refused, he would not only incur the displeasure of the British Government; he would also lose his monthly subsidy of five thousand pounds.

Three months later Philby, then on leave, received a telegram from the Foreign Office: 'Urgent meeting of the Eastern Committee to-night at seven. Lord Curzon desires your presence.' Owing to the fact that the local post office did not deliver telegrams on Sunday Philby got the telegram three days late. He wrote at once to apologize for his absence and received the

answer that the meeting had been postponed until he should arrive in London. On reaching London Philby learnt that the Wahabites had decisively defeated Hussein's son Abdullah near Khurma; that the Hejaz lay defenceless at the mercy of ibn Saud; that ibn Saud was already advancing on Mecca; that ten thousand refugees—mostly Indians and therefore British subjects—were fleeing before him. The Admiralty refused to send any warships. The War Office refused Hussein military support. Curzon was beside himself. Philby said that he was convinced that ibn Saud would not march on Mecca. He was snubbed and told that the British Agent in Jidda must certainly be better informed. Finally it was resolved as the only way out of the dilemma to send Philby to ibn Saud by aeroplane. It took him five days to reach Cairo. There he found that he had been right. Ibn Saud had not invaded the Hejaz. Nevertheless Philby was ordered to proceed on his journey. He took ship to Jidda—only to be met with a refusal on the part of King Hussein to allow him to land.

Meanwhile ibn Saud—mindful of his promise not to attack Hussein—rounded off his dominions in other directions. In 1920 he conquered the mountainous district of Assir. In 1921 he captured Hail, the capital of his enemies the Shammar. In 1922 he occupied the oasis of Jauf and also certain other oases in the north. His frontiers now marched with those of Iraq, Transjordan, and the Hejaz. Meanwhile Hussein's son, Feisal, had become king of Iraq, Abdullah ruled over Transjordan, whilst Hussein ruled in Mecca. All stood under England's protection. At the same time ibn Saud, who was their enemy and who, apart from the Khurma incident, had behaved in so 'correct' a manner, continued to receive his monthly subsidy of five thousand pounds because the order to stop payment had been intercepted somewhere on its way.

In 1921 Lloyd George set up a committee to deal with Near Eastern problems. The committee was divided up into sub-committees. One of these sub-committees was composed of the Colonial Secretary Winston Churchill, Sir Percy Cox, Lawrence, and General Scott. It dealt with the new formulation of Arab policy and with subsidies. The sub-committee resolved to pay the following subsidies: a hundred thousand pounds annually to

Hussein; a hundred thousand pounds annually to ibn Saud; twelve thousand pounds a year to the Idrissi; two hundred and forty thousand rupees a year to Fahdad Bey. Thus Hussein and ibn Saud were balanced equally against each other; the Idrissi served as a counterbalance to the hostile Imâm of Yemen; and Fahdad Bey acted as a buffer between Iraq and ibn Saud's territory. The sub-committee's decision had for their object merely the upholding of Hussein's family and the preservation of the *status quo* that had been achieved with such difficulty.

The frontiers constituted the gravest problem in the British Government's eyes. Actually frontiers did not exist. Frontiers changed in response to the balance of power, the extent of drought, and the condition of water-holes. The Bedouin knew nothing of maps. The idea of drawing across the desert an imaginary line that could not be crossed appeared to them highly ludicrous. According to them, the geography of the desert meant the position of a water-hole, of a stone, of a heap of charred embers where a camp-fire had been, of a skeleton that had lain undisturbed for decades. The British Government nevertheless demanded fixed frontiers for its mandated territories. It wanted a final settlement because it could not continue to pay subsidies for ever. In 1922, therefore, Sir Percy Cox invited ibn Saud to enter into negotiations. Ibn Saud sent a representative. Cox was able to impose his wishes. The treaty of Mohammerah was agreed to. But when ibn Saud read the terms of the treaty he refused to sign it. Cox, therefore, resolved to pay him a personal visit. They met at Uquair, which is situated on the mainland opposite to Bahrein. Magnificent tents, including one fitted up as a bathroom, and foods such as had never before been seen in Arabia, were made ready for ibn Saud's guests. To ibn Saud's anger, Cox brought with him Fahdad Bey, the ruler over the buffer territory. Nevertheless an agreement was reached. The Protocol of Uquair was added to the Treaty of Mohammerah. It permitted the Bedouin tribes to cross and recross the frontiers at will to reach their pastures and watering-places. Moreover, the erection of fortifications beside any of the springs or watering-places was forbidden on either side of the frontier. In addition ibn Saud was to be paid a final instalment of a hundred thousand pounds and then no more.

Five years later there was a new British High Commissioner in Baghdad—Sir Henry Dobbs, who possibly did not know of the existence of the Protocol of Uquair. At any rate the Iraqi built fortifications on their side of the frontier. The Wahabites regarded their action as a breach of the Treaty, destroyed the fortifications, and killed the Iraqi. The British Government sent out aeroplanes and armoured cars against the Wahabites. The Wahabites retorted by raids into Koweit and Iraq. A minor war began. At this juncture another new High Commissioner, Sir Gilbert Clayton, arrived in Baghdad and the matter was settled.

These incidents reveal the indecision of English policy during the first post-War years. Controversy raged. Philby, whom events proved to be right in his opinions, twice sent in his resignation. Committees and subsidies could not prevent the strongest personality in Arabia from enforcing his will even against a pompous and avaricious autocrat supported by England. In 1924 war broke out. Hussein fled and was succeeded on the throne by his son Ali who entrenched himself in Jidda. A year later—1925—ibn Saud was ruling over the Hejaz. The British Government, who were growing weary of Hussein's importunities and who have always possessed the ability to adapt themselves to changing circumstances, adopted an attitude of neutrality during the final struggle. But they seized the opportunity to acquire a strip of land at the head of the Red Sea—the district of Maan and Akaba—that is of great importance for the defence both of the Suez Canal and the empire itself.

Whilst the Shereef Ali was defending himself in Jidda against ibn Saud the proposal was made to him that the English should occupy the Maan-Akaba district in the north of the Hejaz in order to protect it from attack. Ali refused. As long as he was fighting in the south he was not prepared to lose his country owing to inability to put up resistance in the north. His refusal availed him nothing. The district was occupied. Philby, who was an enthusiastic champion of ibn Saud's, commented thus on the event:

'It would be difficult to imagine a more barefaced act of spoliation or a more senseless violation of our traditional reputation for fair play.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of the Central Asian Society*, Vol. XIII, 1926, p. 310.

In every treaty with England or Transjordan (to which the Maan-Akaba district was added) ibn Saud has since made the reservation that he does not abandon his claim to this region.

The Saudi-Arabian empire, composed of Nejd, the Hejaz, and the neighbouring territories to the north and south, is the sole Arab State that has come into existence independently of European influence. Many experts on Arab affairs, therefore, have prophesied that it will enjoy as short a life as all previous kingdoms in the interior of Arabia. It is no more, they say, than a flame shooting up from a fire that must quickly burn itself out through sheer lack of fuel. Their opinion is based on the following arguments—the entire State depends upon a single man. Once he is dead it must fall to pieces. Moreover, the religious fanaticism that produced such astonishing victories cannot always be maintained at white heat. From time immemorial the Arabs have loved conquest. But they have always found it tedious to secure their conquests against subsequent attacks. They prefer to return to their pastures and their wives.

The supporters of ibn Saud, on the other hand, declare that the new State has been built upon foundations such as have never before been laid down in Arabia. For that reason, if for no other, it will endure. And up to the present they appear to have been proved right in the event.

What are these foundations? First of all there is Wahabism—the teaching of the eighteenth-century reformers. Among the most important of these teachings are the following:

It is open to every one whose knowledge entitles him to do so to interpret the Koran and Mahometan traditions in his own fashion. Religion is not the monopoly of any one class that arrogates to itself the sole right to interpret the Koran and the traditions. No human being, no matter how lofty his character and position, can act as advocate for a sinner before God. No intermediary exists between God and man. Therefore each individual man must turn to God alone and not make his prayer to holy places or objects or to saintly persons.

This faith is fanatical; that is to say it is bound up with the desire either to convert or to destroy unbelievers. Although he is extremely pious, ibn Saud is not a fanatic. He endeavours to

divert the religious fervour and superfluous energy of his followers from their neighbours to the garnering of lasting treasure. Out of this desire on ibn Saud's part were born the religious confraternities—the Ichwan—who settle upon the land in communities and devote themselves to its cultivation. A large part of Great Britain's subsidies to ibn Saud have been expended in this fashion. Wells have been sunk and implements provided. Little towns of one thousand, three thousand, or five thousand inhabitants have sprung up over the country. For the first time in history the desert interior of Arabia is being populated. The task is a hard one, but from the standpoint of the State the advantages are great. The food supplies of the nation are being augmented and thus the population can increase. The transition from a nomadic to a settled way of living has been made and the percentage of those among the population who are opposed to raiding is rising. Most important of all, however, is perhaps the fact that the old clan and tribal organization of society is being broken up. That is a fact of far greater importance even in Arabia than in Turkey. For as long as the tribes are sovereign there can be no unity, no co-operation, and no amalgamation. In the Ichwan confraternities, however, men from various tribes are brought together. These confraternities also form the basis for a new army organization. Hitherto the Arabs of the desert have never made trustworthy soldiers. Many instances of their unreliability have already been given. Their fighting value changes with the wind. Philby has said that their motto is: 'He who fights and runs away will live to fight another day.' To-day the new settlements are the main supports of ibn Saud's army. The Ichwan are well armed. In return they must be prepared to march at any moment.

All this has not been accomplished without friction. The Bedouin did not want to abandon their traditional mode of life. The religious fanatics were opposed to all innovations. The tribes, who were formerly beyond the control of any central authority by reason of their mobility, have now learnt that they are powerless against wireless, motor-cars, and aeroplanes. The Ichwan, who toil in the great heat for the sake of their faith, were angry because ibn Saud was so often away from his country, because he left the 'infidel' inhabitants of the Hejaz undis-

turbed in the practice of their religion, and protected heretical pilgrims from other countries. Disorder and rioting occurred; especially during the years 1927 to 1930. Finally ibn Saud defeated the fanatical leader of the Ichwan, Faisal-ibn-Davish, and since his downfall the land has known peace.

The obstacles standing in the way of the new State are perhaps in reality the best guarantees for its continued existence. For they prevent too hasty progress. Even more than was Kemal Ataturk, ibn Saud is forced to convince his followers of the rightness of his actions if he is to lead them. He has been successful in this task. And this fact brings us to the matter in which the sceptics are certainly right, and which even ibn Saud's admirers will not deny: the State depends upon ibn Saud's personality. He unites in himself all the qualities that are necessary for a leader of Arabs. He stands head and shoulders above his fellow-men. He is simple. The humblest man may come and speak with him. He is a clever politician—as witness the fact that he attained to power without offending England. Kind-hearted, charitable, and a tireless worker, he has also a fiery temper. At times he can be very angry—an ability necessary if his kindness is not to be mistaken for weakness by his Arab subjects. He also has what is known as 'personal magnetism'. A young Arab and nationalist from Egypt came to him and offered his services. He was set to work in the organization of the administration of the Hejaz, a country very different from the Nejd. One of Hussein's generals left the Shereef's service in order to serve under this greater master. Such men, who come from afar to serve a venerated leader, make good officials. In certain ways ibn Saud may be compared with Charlemagne. He has several capitals; he travels about the country; he watches over everything. Formerly a land of bandits and robbers, Arabia under ibn Saud has become one of the safest countries in the world. The young State nevertheless can at present only be likened to a skeleton building that needs the constant vigilance of the builder if carelessness anywhere is not to result in serious damage to the whole structure.

Will the structure hold together once the man who built it is no longer living? This question can be asked of Arabia with even greater justification than of Turkey, or even of Iran. For these

latter States have for long past been unified and organized political entities. Saudi-Arabia, on the other hand, has sprung from nothing. In 1900 it did not even exist. Ibn Saud's supporters emphasize the fact that he is still young and that his sons—one is Viceroy of the Hejaz—are taking an intelligent part in governmental business. They hope that in one or two generations a sufficiently strong tradition of co-operative work will have been created to enable the State machine to continue working even if a less powerful ruler should sit upon the throne. Moreover, since ibn Saud's supporters have hitherto been proved true, there does not seem to be any reason why their hopes and wishes for the future should not also find fulfilment.

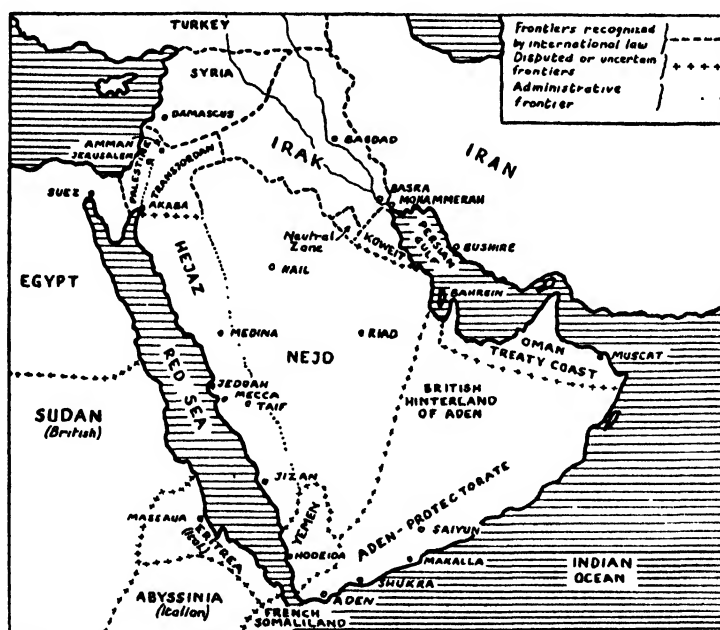
What is the situation of those parts of the Arabian peninsula that are not subject to ibn Saud's authority? We have already made the acquaintance of the coastal regions of the Persian Gulf. There remains the southern and south-western coastline. Ibn Saud has seized the principality of Assir on the south-western coast. In 1934 he waged a successful war against the kingdom of Yemen. Unfortunately no 'indiscreet' accounts exist as yet to tell us what negotiations took place in those days between ibn Saud and England's envoys. The situation is further complicated by the fact that Italy chose Yemen as its first sphere of interest in Arabia. Italy's 'interest' was shown by the dispatch of a man-of-war to Hodeida, the chief port on the Yemen coast. The Islamic countries also showed their interest in the Yemen war by sending a deputation to ibn Saud. The result of his victory, and perhaps even more of foreign intervention, was a 'statesmanlike peace' that left the kingdom of Yemen intact and that was designed to result in friendly relations between the two peoples.

It is but reasonable to suppose that ibn Saud was only restrained by foreign intervention from the annexation of the country. For Yemen is a prey to internal disorders. The King, Iman Yahia, seems to be one of those innumerable Oriental potentates who fill their own treasuries and let their countries go to rack and ruin. His avarice has become proverbial. His sons have once already quarrelled among themselves over the



succession and the possession of their father's wealth. A recent report from Yemen states that the eldest son has thrown three of his brothers into prison. No reliable information exists as to how far Italy has been successful in her endeavours to bring progress to Yemen by means of aeroplanes, road-building, military and economic advisers. Internal reorganization and reform of the richest of all Arab countries is rendered difficult by the fact that the majority of the population are consumers of the intoxicant 'kat'. The physical and moral degeneration that results from the use of this drug was shown during the war of 1934 in the inferior fighting qualities of the erstwhile famous Yemen troops.

At the same time Yemen will doubtless once more be the theatre of important diplomatic—perhaps also warlike—disputes in the future, by reason of its being an Italian sphere of influence situated opposite to Abyssinia and on the frontier of the British protectorate of Aden.



THE ARABIAN PENINSULA

Up to the present the world has looked upon Aden as a town with little hinterland—a strategical outpost of England 'like Gibraltar. Recently, however, it has learnt that the British

Protectorate of Aden includes the whole south-eastern coast of Arabia far into the interior. According to their varying political standpoints people may be heard saying either that the Protectorate of Aden has been subjugated by bloodshed only since the Italian conquest of Abyssinia, or else that it has belonged to England from time immemorial. The last non-English traveller—the third European traveller ever to explore these regions—who visited the hinterland of Aden in 1935 was not conscious of its being British territory. He was, however, no politician. This was Hans Helfritz, who brought back with him delightful pictures of the eight- and ten-storied clay houses of the Hadramaut.

A few facts can be brought forward to disprove the statement that the hinterland has only been brought under British influence since the Abyssinian crisis. First, a map of the Arabian peninsula published in the American periodical *Foreign Affairs* on which the frontiers are delineated and on which the 'hinterland of Aden' is shown in the extent in which it appears on our map. The explanatory text runs:

'On the southern side of the peninsula the hinterland of Aden has been quietly extended till it stretches much farther than is recognized on most maps.'<sup>1</sup>

Although the hinterland in its present extent appears terrifyingly huge, it must not be forgotten that only the edges are populated and that the centre consists of the ill-famed desert—the Rub-al-Kali or 'empty space'—that was crossed by Sir Thomas Bertram for the first and in 1937 by Mr. Philby for the second time, so far as is known, in a north to south direction.

The second fact is to be found in a lecture given in 1925 by the acting Resident in Aden, Lieutenant-Colonel Jacob, on the history of the protectorate. He said *inter alia*:

When Captain Haines of the Indian Navy captured Aden on 19th January 1839, from the hands of the Sultan Mohsin of Lahej, he found a handful of up-country Rulers who exacted blackmail from that Sultan in the form of annual stipends paid to secure him from the harassment of brigandage and invasion. Haines shouldered these liabilities. Gradually other Sultans and Sheikhs sought

<sup>1</sup> *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. IV, July 1926, p. 681.

our friendship and alliance, and further engagements were entered into as the times demanded. The Turks became very active on our northern sphere of influence in 1873, and our policy thenceforward was to make more and more engagements which were styled 'Treaties of Protection'. In reality, our doles, by which the alliances were sealed, were paid as a consideration for the preservation by the tribesmen of peace on the trade routes. In this 'protected' area we made it a rule to refrain from interference with tribal or Sultanly affairs. . . . Thus for many long years we have been expending thousands of rupees annually under the heading of stipends and presents, and we have kept open house in Aden in the shape of a Guest-House, where we entertain throughout the year the tribesmen and subjects of the stipendiaries, who are privileged to send recommendatory letters of introduction to secure the required hospitality. If a chief is in our 'bad books' we curtail the number of these letters.<sup>1</sup>

It is quite obvious from these remarks that the penetration of the hinterland has been in progress for years. Nevertheless it is indisputable that the extension of Italian power on the opposite African coast resulted in an intensification of the process. In 1937 Aden itself was made a Crown Colony. The hinterland, however, is still designated as the 'Protectorate of Aden'. The English periodical *Great Britain and the East* said in January 1938, in a reply to Italian claims:

When, however, some seven or eight years ago it was seen that British representatives could be flown into the Hadhramaut, the Arabs themselves envisaged new possibilities. Do something for us! they said to the British. We want roads, we want progress amongst ourselves. Above all, we want an end to the civil wars which the Bedouin (as the villagers in the Hadhramaut are commonly called) ceaselessly wage, pillaging and destroying. Of ourselves we cannot achieve this, but help us and we will bring prosperity to our ancient fatherland.<sup>2</sup>

It reads well. Nevertheless progress was not introduced entirely without bloodshed. In the struggle between the two most powerful tribes, the Kathiri and the Katai, England sided with the Katai. Their ruler is the Sultan of Makalla. He asked for an 'adviser' who now resides in the interior at Saiyun. He

<sup>1</sup> Journal of the Central Asian Society, Vol. XII, 1925, pp. 27-8.

<sup>2</sup> *Great Britain and the East*, 20th January, 1938, p. 72.

was also given an English officer to train his army. In addition, about 1935-6, a Resident, Mr. W. H. Ingrams, was appointed. In the company of his wife he has made a number of journeys into the interior of Hadramaut, the land of the wonderful clay 'sky-scrappers'.

Ever since the intensification of the British penetration of the country only English reports on it are available, and these are few and far between. Philby appears to be as critical of British policy in southern Arabia as he was formerly of British policy in northern Arabia. Perhaps the British Government, by supporting the Katai instead of the Kathiri, has once again put its money on the wrong horse? Perhaps the Sultan of Kathiri who has ostensibly been made a prisoner will one day be the greatest man in Arabia?

In 1937 to 1938 Freya Stark in company with two women archaeologists visited the interior in search of the temple of Saba. She speaks Arabic and is able to live and talk with the common folk. She spoke with numbers of people and also doctoring many who came to her. In *The Times* of 19th July 1938, she wrote:

We were in the country at a difficult time. Soon after our arrival the general peace was ruffled by trouble to the north with the Se'ar, who stole and refused to restore forty-two camels, trusting to escape retribution in their almost unvisited ravines. This was barely settled when a more serious affair developed in the south with the Humumi, who, living by camel traffic, inevitably dislike motor roads, and showed their disapproval of the one to the coast by looting all that went along it. Ripples of uneasiness went over the land while Mr. Ingrams and the Aden Government made patient efforts to settle the matter by persuasion rather than bombs. In our valley the Ja'da tribe kept quiet—partly, I rather think, owing to our presence there. The only punitive action that can have any effect in a mountainous roadless country like the Hadramaut is Air Force action. This under its present elaborate—and desirable—safeguards is slow to get going. Endless negotiation precedes it. When a tribe is accused of any crime—almost invariably brigandage or murder—it is first invited to send a deputation from whatever district it inhabits to answer the accusation. After the facts have been established a second date is fixed for payment of the fine, usually in rifles. At the same time the political officers do what they can in a persuasive way to show the advisability of pay-

ing. If the second date passes and the fine is not paid, the threat of bombing is used, and a third date is fixed, which in the case of the Se'ar was again postponed as the chiefs accepted further invitations to confer. The fine can be paid at the eleventh hour, or when the bombing raids have actually begun, and in no case is the amount either increased or diminished. The Arabs raise their eyebrows over these delays, say 'The British are merciful' in a not very complimentary tone, and leave it at that.

The bombing eventually takes place on the day prescribed. Casualties during the last three conflicts in the Hadhramaut have been fewer than a dozen, since the people naturally see to it that their villages are empty. The number of lives saved, on the other hand, by the 'English peace' is estimated by the local people at ten a month or more, nor do I consider this to be at all an improbable figure. Damage to the houses is not serious, but that to the crops is far more regrettable and seems to be the only real loss which Air Force bombing in its present form entails.

With the exception of the province of Azzan where the people fear the loss of the slave trade Freya Stark encountered friendly feelings towards the English nearly everywhere. Azzan, on the other hand, she found in a state of rebellion because a few days before her arrival the first aeroplane of the Royal Air Force had made its appearance. It would seem that some oratory and a few bombs may be necessary in this province before the *Pax Britannica* is established.

Arabia to-day is, therefore, divided into three parts. In the eastern and southern coastal districts English influence is at work as a result of treaties granting protection to innumerable petty rulers. In the south-west, where the Red Sea narrows down to the 'Gate of Tears', is the independent State of Yemen, internally weak, but supported by the Great Power—Italy—that rules on the opposite shore. On the western coast almost up to the head of the Gulf is the vast independent kingdom ruled over by ibn Saud. In regard to England ibn Saud's kingdom possesses one advantage—its province of el Hasa on the Persian Gulf acts as a spearhead thrust in between the British spheres of influence. Only the future can show to what extent ibn Saud stands under British control by reason of secret treaties. The reproach uttered by Pan-Arabists in Iraq that 'he has sold himself to England' is probably not altogether in accordance with the facts. Neverthe-

less it does suggest that the British Government has altered its policy since 1918.

## SYRIA

A survey of the course of events in Syria during the last twenty years leads to the conclusion that the intentions of the French in coming into the country were quite honest and sincere. France took no part in the war in Syria and Mesopotamia and therefore did not understand the special nature of the problem. All that the French heard from the English on the subject of the necessity of Arab independence seemed to them to be either inspired by spite or in the nature of an attempt to limit French rights. The French gained colonial experience in Africa and Indo-China. They believed this to be sufficient. They knew also that France had since the sixteenth century been looked upon as the protector of the Christians in the East. The French, therefore, came to Syria in the belief that they would be greeted with joy by the Christians as liberators and that they would be able to deal with the Moslems in Arabia as they had formerly dealt with them in Algeria, Tunis, and Morocco.

Everything turned out differently. There are in Syria twenty-one Christian sects, one and all jealous of each other, each of whom watches carefully to see that none of the others is favoured more than itself. Their leaders are less concerned with the care of souls than with the extension of their own individual power. The number of Moslem sects is unknown. There are Sunnites and Shiites, Ismaili, Nasariyeh, Druzes—all those we have already encountered—and others as well. In addition there are divisions and rivalries between Bedouin and Fellaheen and great landowners. There are Turks, Kurds, and Yezidi. There are foreign influences. The descendants of Abd-el-Kader, who led the revolt against the French in Algeria, live in Damascus, and are rich and powerful. The members of this family are so subversive and ambitious that on the day after his entry into Damascus Lawrence would dearly have liked to send their representatives before a firing-squad.

The French soon learnt the importance to be attached to the phrase: 'They have taken to the mountains'—a phrase that con-

tinually recurs in the history of Syria. Syria has never indeed had a continuous and unified history. Nevertheless its physical frontiers are sharply defined. The desert of Sinai separates it from Egypt, deserts and steppes from the interior of Arabia, the Amanus Mountains from Anatolia, and the Mediterranean from Europe. Only twice in the course of four thousand years have the rulers of the great kingdoms of Asia Minor had their capitals in Syria. The Seleucid Sultans in Antioch and the Omayyad Caliphs in Damascus. Both these kingdoms were set up by foreigners. On all other occasions the conquerors came from abroad. Egyptians from the south, Hittites and Turks from the north, Assyrians and Persians from the north and east, Greeks and Romans and Crusaders from the west, Arabs from the south-east. Syria has always been incorporated in foreign kingdoms either as a whole or else divided up between north and south.

All these foreign invaders brought with them their own religious and political customs. Something of each has remained to this day. The Syrians had nothing of their own to set against all these foreign influences and they lacked the strength to fuse them into a harmonious whole. Each time a new invasion came those who refused to submit simply sought refuge in the mountains. Mountains are plentiful—high, steep, rocky, inaccessible. In the south black volcanic ranges; grey deeply indented ridges in the north; and the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon snow-covered and formerly forest-clad. These were the resort of the recalcitrant, the obdurate, the irreconcilable. It was such men who made Syria a paradise for particularists.

The habit of humans—especially soldiers—of scribbling on walls or carving words on stones or tree trunks has resulted in the preservation of a two-thousand-year-old record of spontaneous wrath over the Syrians. In the neighbourhood of Damascus Roman soldiers scratched these words upon a stone: 'The Syrians are a rotten crowd.' The twentieth-century French soldiers endorse this opinion.

There are, however, two sides to every question. The Syrians were the first to start the movement for Arab independence. In 1904 a *Ligue de la Patrie arabe* was founded in Paris and demanded the creation of a great Arab kingdom. Propaganda has been

carried on ever since those days. Damascus has its martyrs in the cause of independence. Feisal felt that he was called to found this great Arab kingdom. He was indeed a foreigner in Syria. Nevertheless, thanks to Lawrence's cleverness at the time of the establishment of the first Arab Government, he was able to make his authority felt, even though the country was never peaceful under his rule. The French thought they were entering a country occupied by the Allies that had been allotted to them as a mandated territory. They were exhausted as the result of the War and could only dispatch a few troops—enough to act as a guard for the mandatory administration that was about to be set up. Instead they found themselves called upon to fight a war on two fronts. In the north were the Turks. The Turks took the view that Cilicia did not form a part of Syria. They drove the French out of the Taurus and defeated them at Marash, Urfa, and Bozanti, and besieged Gazi Aintep. In order the better to get rid of them they stirred up the Emir Feisal against the French in Damascus. Not indeed that Feisal stood in need of any special incitement.

The Emir Feisal adopted a hostile attitude. It is true that he had concluded an agreement with Clemenceau in Paris by which he was to hold sway over the interior of Syria from Damascus to Aleppo in return for his recognition of French suzerainty. Nevertheless his followers in the War refused to hear of any concessions to, or co-operation with, the French. The fact that the French were defeated by the Turks acted as a stimulus to Feisal and his supporters. Feisal announced that the French army might not make use of his portion of the railway, that is, the line between Aleppo and Rayak. This was a severe blow to the French who urgently needed this stretch of line in order to pursue their campaign against the Turks. Feisal also prevented any wheat from the interior reaching the coast. Travellers and traders were plundered by Syrian bandits. The inhabitants of Damascus afforded shelter to rebels and refugees from the French zone and aided them to escape to Transjordan or Iraq.

On 14th July 1920, the French Commander-in-Chief and High Commissioner, General Gouraud, sent an ultimatum to Feisal demanding the following guarantees: French control of



the Rayak-Aleppo railway; abolition of compulsory military service in the eastern zone and the reduction of Feisal's army to the strength at which it had stood in 1919; punishment of criminals who had fled into the eastern from the western zone; recognition of the French mandate; introduction of the new Syrian currency. (Feisal had already coined twelve gold pieces as specimens for the currency he proposed to introduce into his territory; of these ten are preserved in the museum in Damascus and an eleventh is in the King of Italy's possession.) Feisal endeavoured to negotiate. Gouraud refused. Feisal's acceptance of the ultimatum only arrived two hours after the expiration of the appointed time. The French troops were already on the march. They refused to retire or—better said—Gouraud made no attempt to withdraw them. They met with no resistance and grew careless. They had crossed the Anti-Lebanon and entered a narrow rocky gorge. At the outlet to the gorge they met their enemy. All military experts are agreed that the position that had been chosen for the Arabs by the former Turkish officer Azmé Bey was unsurpassable. They are also agreed that the French force of ten thousand men must inevitably have been annihilated if the Arabs had fought properly. The Arabs, however, gave way before the determined resistance offered by the French and preferred to retreat swiftly for the purpose of plundering Damascus before the French should enter there. The Turkish officer died fighting. King Feisal with his attendants fled to Palestine. Subsequently he returned only to find himself banished across the frontier.

Notwithstanding their easy victory the French were confronted by a hard task. They were forced to make peace with Turkey on terms that involved them in a heavy loss of prestige. They were surrounded by enemies on all sides. Turkey was hostile. Transjordan, which was ruled over by Feisal's brother Abdullah, was hostile. The Zionists in Palestine and even the English were believed to be hostile. In addition there were the mountain tribes of the interior. The Nasariyeh offered the most stubborn resistance and fought more bravely than the Arabs of Damascus. In the course of time eighty thousand French troops arrived in Syria for the purpose of 'pacifying' a population of three millions. Moreover, Armenians and Assyrians were en-

gaged as volunteers after the pattern of the English enlistment of Assyrian soldiers in Iraq.

The first High Commissioners took the side of the Christian sects. After his arrival Gouraud solemnly declared: 'My presence here sets the seal upon the victory of the Cross over the Crescent.' His words were addressed to the Christians. But the Moslems could not fail to hear them. They were certainly not calculated to awaken their sympathy for French rule. A still greater error was the establishment of the State of 'Greater Lebanon' that included not only the predominantly Christian and hitherto autonomous province of Lebanon, but also the Moslem coastal districts in the north and the south. The result was that the remainder of Syria, excepting only the harbour of Alexandretta which was declared 'autonomous' several years later to comply with Turkish wishes, was completely cut off from the coast. All that remained of Syria was divided into two States with their capitals at Aleppo and Damascus. This arrangement subsequently revealed itself as impracticable. The two States were then united into one, but on the other hand two new 'States'—that of the Jebel Druze and of the Alawiyin—were set up. There are, therefore, five 'States' for a total population of three millions. Greater Lebanon with its capital at Beirut where the High Commissioner resides; Syria with Damascus as its capital; Jebel Druze with its capital Suweidi; the State of the Alawiyin with its capital Latakia; the Sanjak of Alexandretta. The French declare that the rivalries in the interior of the country are so great that a system of government common to all the parts is impossible. The Syrians retort by saying that the French have partitioned the country in order to be able to hold down the inhabitants more easily. Both statements are true.

The second High Commissioner General Weygand was an outstanding personality—just, humane, incorruptible. He appointed able men to official posts and improved agriculture and trade. Even his opponents respected him. He was recalled because the new Herriot Government did not like officials who were also good Catholics. He was succeeded by General Sarraill whom we have already met in these pages. Sarraill managed to offend not only all the leaders of the Churches but also all

influential Moslems. The first to rise in rebellion against him and his principal collaborator, Captain Carbillet, were the Druzes (see p. 130). The rebellion of the Druzes was gradually transformed by Sarraill's provocative actions into a general rising throughout the country. For an instant individualism was overcome. The chief action in the 'war' was the bombardment of Damascus. The bombardment obviously arose from a sort of panic. Without any preliminary ultimatum, without any warning whatsoever, without even the foreign Consuls having been notified, the thickly populated parts of the city were subjected to an artillery bombardment. The entire population of Damascus—native Christians, Moslems, Europeans—was momentarily united against France. It was only thanks to the family of Abdel-Kader that no Christian blood was shed.

Sarraill was recalled in his turn. Gamelin carried on the struggle to its end in a series of costly individual actions. Civilians then made their appearance as High Commissioners. De Jouvenel was followed by Ponsot. They attempted to set up native governments and to draw up constitutions that should function under French supervision. Although rapid progress was made in this direction in the Lebanon, their endeavours met with little success in Syria. The Comte de Goutaut-Biron, who was charged in 1928 with the inspection of the *Service des Renseignements* in Syria, wrote on the subject of these attempts to introduce parliamentarism:

One must ask oneself what the so-called democratic constitutional reforms mean in this country. For my part, I see nothing in them but a vast, stupid deception. Only inexperienced newcomers would let themselves be taken in by it, but not men accustomed to the practice of Oriental politics. Far from encouraging the dawn of an era of freedom, this means of applying the parliamentary system by elections is bound to perpetuate the corrupt despotism of the tribal chiefs and of the great landlords and their tyranny over the poor. A truly ludicrous paradox—the mandate exercised by French policy tends to favour a caste of oppressors who cannot be brought to account, and leads to the triumph of feudalism!

And another Frenchman, Maurice Pernot, writing in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* in 1927, said:

You want the Syrians to keep quiet. Then let them make money; let them keep on making more money. That will have a far better effect than giving them Ministers and Parliaments, and allowing them to vote and to propose motions in the House. . . . Train fewer lawyers and more engineers!

But earning money was just what the Syrians could not do. In this matter Syrians and the people of Lebanon were for once in agreement. The Tramway Company, the Harbour Boards, the railway, had all been in French hands since before the War. All newly established companies were also in French hands. Worst of all was the coupling of the Syrian pound with the French franc. The franc wavered, fell, steadied, and fell again. The Syrians are first-rate business men. After the War they acquired the technique of inflation far quicker than the more slow-witted Europeans. The result was a monetary chaos in economic life that resembled the sectarian chaos in religious life. The corn merchants in Aleppo dealt and still deal in Turkish gold pounds regardless of the fact that the Turkish gold pound no longer existed. In Damascus the *en pension* prices at the hotels are quoted to foreigners in shillings. The Palestinian pound is the favoured currency in Hauran, while in Beirut the business houses reckon in English pounds. Nevertheless everywhere there is only one subject of conversation: 'How much did you get yesterday for a pound sterling? And how much to-day?' The same is true of Aleppo and Antioch, of Alexandretta, Latakia, Tripoli, and Beirut. The question is invariably accompanied by an anxious look on the questioner's face. For the economic reasons that make for devaluation in France do not exist in Syria. Each new fall of the franc means a fresh burden upon all classes of the population. Prices rise. Wages remain stationary. There are many officials, clerks, minor employees, etc., whose salaries are in reality only worth the half of what they were worth two years ago.

It would perhaps have been easier to endure these privations and burdens if the neighbouring peoples had also been groaning under them. But the currencies of the neighbouring peoples were stable. Those of Egypt, Palestine, and Iraq were pegged to the English pound. Turkey has indeed introduced exchange restrictions. The rate of exchange is nevertheless fixed and invariable.

After the Allied occupation Syria also enjoyed a stabilized currency. The English introduced the Egyptian pound. The French, however, found it too costly to buy Egyptian pounds in order to pay salaries in Syria. They therefore introduced the Syrian pound. Yet whenever a punitive levy was made on a rebellious village it had to be paid in gold. All these things severally and collectively contributed to render the population bitter on the subject of French mandatory administration. And if a guest in order to relieve the general depression said: 'But now Daladier will stabilize the franc,' he received the answer: 'We have often heard that tale before. And then three months later there is a new devaluation.' For this reason calculations continued to be made in gold pounds and in English pounds. But the man in the street who scarcely earned a single gold pound in a whole year found himself daily in a worse situation and with no means of defence.

The centre of Beirut is the Cannon Square. At its lower end stands a wonderful building constructed of the Syrian stone used by the Crusaders in building their castles, that turns a dark golden yellow beneath the sun and the moisture-laden wind--a glowing colour rarely found in stone. The building is the old seraglio that formerly served as the palace of the Turkish governors. Beside the seraglio a street leads down to the harbour with its tiny local railway, its agencies and offices, its modern steamers and old sailing vessels. Upwards, directly upwards from the Cannon Square, the road leads to Damascus. It runs straight past little clumps of pines, winds through the many summer resorts of the Lebanon, coming ever closer to the snows, and always with a view back over the spreading city and the violet-blue sea beyond. Then the road plunges down the other side into the warm fertile plain in which stands ruined Baalbek, and continues in a straight line towards the next range of mountains with their snow-covered crests--the Anti-Lebanon. On the other side of the Anti-Lebanon at the foot of the mountains and on the edge of the desert, closely hemmed in by hot, dry, yellow hills, lies Damascus encircled by oases of fruit trees and not by dusty palms, a refreshingly green-leaved tree standing in the court of each of its old houses, and the tumbling

waters of the Barada flowing criss-cross through its streets.

It is only sixty-six miles from Beirut to Damascus. The Beirut chauffeurs with their speedy cars do the journey in an hour and forty minutes. The two cities belong to each other—one akin to the desert, the other to the sea. They complement one another. In Damascus the desert traffic collects—camel caravans as well as motor-bus convoys and lorries. Damascus is the centre of commerce for the fertile districts in the interior of Syria and for everything that comes from Mesopotamia. Beirut is the door opening on to the world overseas. The two cities have always belonged together even when Palestine or parts of northern Syria have been cut off from the main body of Syria. In 1938, however, they and their surrounding districts were suddenly separated by a Customs barrier between Lebanon and Syria. The imagination boggles at the idea that the tiny strip of coast with its defenceless frontier running over mountains and valleys should be cut off from its hinterland. A pessimist has with melancholy humour remarked: 'The whole population of Syria—men, women, and children—will have to stand along the frontier if they are to watch over it. And if they starve as a consequence they won't need imports any longer, and the problem will be solved.' Serious people declare that it is lunacy. Lebanese, Syrians, French—all are agreed that it is lunacy. The merchants of Damascus and Beirut bombard their Governments with petitions that they should do away with this monstrosity. Commissions meet, discuss, and dissolve without reaching any conclusion. Nobody will give way.

The quarrel is due to lack of unanimity over the division of the Customs revenues that constitute the chief source of income for both countries. Up to 1936 and until the signature of the treaty with France the mandatory Government in Beirut had collected the Customs dues for both Syria and the Lebanon, added the small revenue from taxation, and then divided the sum between the two countries. This total was called *intérêts communs*—'matters of interest common to both'. The proportion in which it was divided between the two countries was never made public. Now that France is making ready to lay down her mandate, however, the two countries are called upon to divide the revenue between them. 'They'll soon find out how badly they will fare when they

are left to themselves,' the French may well have thought. It obviously never occurred to the Lebanese and the Syrians that their quarrel tends to justify France. The Syrians say: 'We are entitled to the larger share of the Customs revenue because we have the larger population.' The Lebanese retort: 'We are entitled to the larger share of the revenue because we are far more civilized. We import all sorts of goods from Europe—clothes, stockings, typewriters, gramophone records, and motor-cars. You are only entitled to an infinitesimal fraction.'—'It is a struggle between quantity and quality,' said a journalist in Beirut in a detached and friendly manner. Indeed each individual person is calm and good-natured and sees the other's point of view. But both parties have one thing in common: a shrug of the shoulders, and a smile at the innocence of the foreigner who thinks that the application of common sense would improve the situation. 'Nothing can be altered. We shall never be able to agree.' And, therefore, they regard a lunatic solution as perfectly practicable—after three years of Customs barriers it will be possible to calculate how large is the share of imports of each party.

The Press on both sides is less indifferent. It is provocative. The Syrians are reproached for their everlasting obstinacy and for being responsible for the rupture of negotiations. For their part the Syrians accuse the Lebanese of intending quickly and secretly to disguise the goods they import from Europe as Lebanese goods and then to export them to Syria free of duty. 'Otherwise', they argue, 'the Lebanese could give us a free zone in the harbour and we could take our imports to Syria in sealed wagons.' And this venomous controversy is carried on under the banner of '*Interêts Communs*'.

Another dispute that roused the two countries to fever heat against each other was that which arose over the Gesireh. After the War this triangular stretch of country in the north was a wild and desolate steppe. To-day it is a flourishing, productive, fertile land. Hundreds of villages now stand where twenty years ago only a few miserable clay hovels were to be found. Neither the Lebanese nor the Syrians nor the French are responsible for this transformation. It was the work of Assyrian, Armenian, and Kurdish refugees who settled on the land.

The French officials in the Gesireh were well disposed and efficient. Under their supervision the Gesireh prospered and was happy up to the conclusion of the treaty by which the French began to give the Government at Damascus a free hand in the administration. The first action of the Damascus Government was to dismiss all the native officials appointed by the French and to replace them by its own men. Nothing could be more obvious. Were not the others creatures of France? Must not the new and still restricted authority show itself as far-reaching as possible? In the eyes of the inhabitants of the Gesireh, however, the new officials from Damascus were nationalistic Centralists and fanatical Moslems. They remembered what had happened in Iraq when England relinquished her mandate and the Government at Baghdad became independent. Several hundred Christian Assyrians had been murdered. The inhabitants of the Gesireh were constantly reminded of this event when they saw the thousands of miserably poor Assyrian refugees who were living in their midst in concentration camps and waiting for the League of Nations—which had occupied itself with this problem at every one of its sessions during the past four years—to decide their fate. It is true that the Assyrians were themselves partly to blame for their misfortunes. Was not, however, the case of the Armenians similar? They too had fought for the French against the Syrians.

The non-Sunnites in the Gesireh were also uneasy. It so happened that the Mohafiz, or local governor, sent from Damascus to reside at Hassetché suddenly disappeared. Anxiety increased. His kidnappers were captured with French assistance four days later, brought to Damascus, and flung into prison. A few months later another Mohafiz was sent to Hassetché. His name was Haidar Mardam and he was a nephew of the Syrian Prime Minister. He arrived in a state of nervousness. He was obliged to receive numerous petitions. In April 1938, he went to Damascus after having promised to obtain the release of his predecessor's kidnappers and to bring them back with him to Hassetché. On his return without the kidnappers he was greeted outside Hassetché by an enraged mob. The result of the fight that took place between the crowd and the Mohafiz with his guard of four policemen was five dead and some seventy wounded. That



at least is certain. Over the circumstances leading up to the fighting accounts differ. Estimates of the extent of the crowd vary from four hundred to a thousand. One account states that the mob was armed to the teeth, whilst another declares that it was chiefly composed of women and children. The most dramatic and highly coloured narrative is that contained in the Mohafiz's own report. Fennimore Cooper might have learnt something from the way in which incident was piled upon incident in this thriller. The Lebanese Press seized greedily upon the report and kept on repeating the question: 'How was it that neither the Mohafiz nor his family nor the policemen received so much as a scratch in this struggle with a thousand heavily armed men? Why did these heavily armed men allow themselves to be shot down and wounded without showing any fight?'

The fight outside Hassetché was, however, not the end of the matter. The police force of Hassetché was confined to the seraglio and did not dare to venture out. The Mohafiz—now back in Damascus—consoled them with gifts of cheese and mutton to prevent them from starving. The population of Hassetché went on strike. The French delegate in Damascus, the Comte Ostrorog, and Brunet, the Commander-in-Chief of the French forces, flew to Deir-ez-Zor so as to inform themselves of the situation on the spot. The Syrian Minister of the Interior made a statement to journalists immediately after the occurrence of these events. In his statement the following sentence is to be found: 'If similar incidents had taken place in any civilized country, the Government would have demolished the town and exterminated its inhabitants as well as the instigators of the rebellion.' And again: 'Three persons were killed and many wounded. I wish there had been more of them.'

The Beirut Press with secret satisfaction not only reprinted these sentences, but twisted them, exploited them to the uttermost, made headlines of them. All denials from Damascus proved useless. Two weeks after the incident long leading articles were still being published about the unhappy minority in the Gesireh; their fate was a certainty from the moment the French should have taken their departure; for the words spoken by the Minister of the Interior were simply the announcement

of a great massacre. 'Massacre' is a favourite word of Beirut journalists. They know that it serves to awaken the fear and hatred implanted during a thousand years. At the same time they seek to appear as cool and detached thinkers who are always ready for compromise, while only the black-hearted Syrians are unwilling to make concessions.

The Syrian Parliament replied with attacks upon the corruptible and treacherous Beirut Press. Who had paid it? That was obvious—France. It would have been inexpedient to say this aloud since France was after all Syria's future friend and ally and Damascus was for the present dependent upon the aid of French troops if a rebellion had to be put down anywhere.

A Cabinet crisis followed in Syria and lasted for several days. Whispers flew round the high, cool bazaars of Damascus. Articles appeared in the Lebanon Press. Dispatches were drafted in the Consulates of Beirut. Would Saadallah Jabri, the Minister of the Interior, resign? Would the entire Cabinet resign? Everything remained as before. The Minister of the Interior was born in Aleppo. The rivalry between Aleppo and Damascus is only a degree less than that between Beirut and Damascus. It would have been too dangerous at this moment to annoy Aleppo. The excitement, therefore, died down. Nevertheless the slightest incident would have sufficed to make it flare up again. On 20th September 1938 *The Times* reported: 'The Jezirah district, between the Euphrates and the Iraqi and Turkish frontiers, is in a disturbed condition. Taxes cannot be collected, the large Kurdish element is giving trouble, and officials appointed there dare not take up their posts.'

At the same time it was reported from the Jebel Druze that the Druzes took no notice of the instructions they received from Damascus. They had hauled down the Syrian flag. And as far as other things were concerned they were living as it pleased them to live.

Who was behind the disturbances? There are many answers to this question. Three young men in Damascus, who were hostile and suspicious of each other, when asked independently gave the same answer—the French. The secretary of the leader of a Party that was closely akin to the Popular Front answered: the Fascists. A Syrian from the north declared: the Turks. Nothing

has been proved. Not even against the French. Nevertheless the French have supported the minorities against the Moslems for eighteen years. They have made use of the unrest in the Gesireh as well as among the Druzes and the Alawiyin to delay the ratification of the treaty and to make fresh demands. It is easy to suspect them; more especially because the term 'the French' is a misleading one. Each Frenchman has his own opinions and his own aims. Even if the High Commissioner, de Martel, was in favour of ratification it is possible that some of his staff might be numbered among the treaty's opponents.

Since the conclusion of the treaty in the winter of 1936-7 the discovery of oil-wells has given the Gesireh a new importance in the eyes of the signatories. The question of the oil rights is one of the thorniest problems in the supplementary negotiations between France and Syria. Paris—certainly not without some pressure from London—wishes all the boring rights to be given to the Iraq Petroleum Company. The Iraq Petroleum Company wants to purchase the rights outright to avoid competition. Nevertheless it will not begin to bore because it has more oil at its disposal than it can sell. Syria wishes boring to start at once in order that, like Iraq, it may become a rich and independent land by means of its oil revenues. A compromise is under discussion—the Iraq Petroleum Company undertakes to begin boring within five years. If it does not do so, it will none the less pay. Has this compromise been accepted? Are there other proposals? Nobody knows. Even in the bazaars rumours are wanting.

On the other hand, there are plenty of other rumours. It is said that sinkings made on the coast near Tripoli have proved successful; that from the Gesireh to the Mediterranean there exists a vast deposit of petroleum; that the French could simply tap these wells near the coast and let the oil pour directly into their tankers. This does not seem very probable because oil deposits are not usually found all in one piece. If, however, it were to prove true that oil exists in Tripoli, the whole political situation would be altered basically. France would be able in certain circumstances to abandon the pipe-line from Kirkuk to Tripoli that is so expensive to guard. She could more easily abandon Syria because the pipe-line for the main part runs

through the Syrian desert. In that event Syria, which always comes off badly, would see her hopes of oil-born affluence disappear again. For Tripoli belongs to Lebanon. Tripoli, Moslem Tripoli, where demonstrations are continually taking place in favour of union with Syria, where strikes broke out in protest against the partition of Palestine—Tripoli, with its lovely harbour, its Crusaders' castle, and its dome-decked dervish monastery, belongs by right to Syria. It was the French who joined it to Lebanon. It is another '*intérêt commun*' for both States—an eternal bone of contention.

Two years ago, when it was still a question of wresting independence from France, Syria and Lebanon fought side by side. A proclamation of the Christian Maronite Patriarch Arida was read aloud in the Moslem Holy of Holies—the Omayyad Mosque in Damascus—to the accompaniment of general acclamation. A gentlemen's agreement was arrived at: Syria was prepared to lay aside her demands for union and Lebanon agreed to use her influence in favour of Syria. To-day all is forgotten. Any number of Christian Lebanese on being reminded of the common effort will reply: 'Oh! Yes. You are quite right. But that was only political strategy; it meant nothing. We shall never come to an agreement with the Syrians.' Why this change over? The French lay the blame for it on the events that took place in Beirut in November 1936. Are they right? Who can tell in such a long-standing and complicated affair? In November 1936 only a few days after the conclusion of the treaty with France the Moslems in Beirut entered the Christian quarter. They plundered the shops, set fire to houses, and demanded union with Syria. The police were called upon to restore order. Instead the Christian and the Moslem policemen took to fighting among themselves. The Christians in their turn plundered the Mahometan quarter. Soldiers had to be called out before order was finally restored. 'This', the French say, 'recalled memories of fifteen centuries of persecution and oppression among the Christian Lebanese. They know very well that they can only live under French protection.' The French did nothing to cause this ancient fear to die down again. And the more recent memory of the fight fought at the side of Syria has been ousted by it.

Agreement on the basis of the complete union demanded by the Syrian Nationalists seems impossible. For it would involve the subjection of the Europeanized and intellectually superior coastal and harbour populations to the fanatical Syrians of the interior. A true solution is only to be found in compromise. Two movements that still lack any real importance have shown themselves in favour of compromise. The two have in common the desire to bridge religious and racial differences. 'We do not ask whether a man is Christian or Moslem, Druze or of the Alawiyyin so long as he is a good Arab,' the one movement declares; 'so long as he is a good Syrian,' says the other. The former is the older of the two and is known as Pan-Arabism. Its leader is Dr. Rahman Shahbander, who was banished by the Turks only to return during the War. He fought in the Druze rebellion, was banished by the French, and now lives in his house in the European quarter of Damascus again. He is a poet and an intellectual, influenced by Western and Anglo-Saxon culture. He is a subtle opponent, a political dreamer. Viewed from the Syrian standpoint, Pan-Arabism looks like a 'desire dream', to provide an escape from Syria as it actually is. It is hoped that beneath the great Pan-Arab roof that covers Wahabites, Sunnites and Shiites, Iraqis and Transjordanians, Fellaheen and Bedouin, even the Syrian quarrels may be stilled and the numerous hostile Syrian parties achieve some kind of neighbourly relations.

The other Party—the Youth Movement or Antun Saadi—does not hold these beliefs. It wants to exclude religion and to educate Syrians. It wants to abolish Parliamentarianism, which it regards as corrupt. It does not send any representatives into Parliament. It is working and waiting for the coming of the totalitarian State. This Party has only been in existence for six years and has few members. It is hated and banned in Syria, hated and tolerated in Lebanon. It forms a sort of competition to Fakhri Barudi Bey who has been Youth Leader for years. It seems certain that the Party members are sincere idealists. Nevertheless they have not been through as much as Dr. Shahbander. They have never been involved in Party strife. It is not impossible that the Youth Party and the Pan-Arabs who look upon each other with friendly eyes may one day achieve the compromise. Nevertheless it will certainly be a long time

before '*intérêt commun*' is a reality instead of a bitter jest. If ever real co-operation should be achieved, then the fact that the abolition of particularism was accomplished by their own unaided efforts instead of under French supervision may perhaps be a cause of internal strength.

Situated at the foot of the Anti-Lebanon and on the edge of the desert, Damascus is at once vaguely cosmopolitan and something of a holy place. Saladin lies buried in a chapel here. Two coffins stand side by side. One is the—reputedly—original coffin; the other dedicated to the romantic champion by the Emperor William II during his travels in the East when he was trying to win over the Arab world. In the garden of the chapel beneath a great pomegranate tree lies a more recent Arab grave. It is the grave of the exiled Iraqi Premier Yasin Pasha el Hashimi, who died a natural death—a fact specially emphasized in these parts—in Damascus and who is nevertheless looked upon as a martyr for the Pan-Arab cause. A few steps away from Saladin's grave stands the mosque of the Sunnite Omayyads who at first shared the ancient house of prayer with the Christians but subsequently claimed the whole building for themselves. It was they who built the splendid new cloisters and porches and covered them with mosaics.

Only when one stands on the wide, burning-hot, asphalt streets of the modern European quarter is it possible to appreciate the marvellous way in which the old city of Damascus—so often destroyed and as often restored—was built. The broad streets in the bazaars are roofed and vaulted; broken rays of light penetrate, but no heat. The open streets are so narrow and the houses on either side so high that there is always a strip of shade along the walls. The houses that show smooth, forbidding walls towards the outside are built round little green, tree-shaded gardens. The sparkling and rippling waters of the Barada are caught in stone basins before they resume their subterranean journey. The lower rooms are eighteen to twenty-four feet in height in order that they may remain cool. No house is without its garden room built with three walls and a roof, and open on the fourth, the north, side on to a garden.

During a walk through Damascus, a youth with the long

narrow head that denotes good birth, a hooked nose, and deep, dark eyes, pointed to the bare, hot hills surrounding the city and said: 'On all those hills are the forts of the French. They can blow Damascus to pieces whenever they like.' He was not yet seventeen and he spoke English in order to avoid using French. His smile was as full of bitterness as if he had already experienced all the disappointments of a long life.

What will happen to these French forts on the hills? What will happen to the Senegalese and Indo-Chinese troops who still parade through the modern streets of Damascus? In 1936 the question seemed to have been answered. To-day the problem is as far from solution as it ever was. In January and February 1936 there were strikes and risings in Syria. Disorder and bloodshed in Palestine, disturbances and arrests in French North Africa, and student rioting in Egypt were so many signs of unrest in the Mediterranean world, provoked by the Abyssinian crisis. Syria appeared as merely a link in a chain and not an isolated case. Troops were called out. Summary tribunals worked night and day. The leaders of the rebels were arrested and banished. The policy of the 'iron hand' seemed to be proving successful when suddenly and wholly unexpectedly a change came over the scene. At the beginning of March 1936, Comte de Martel, the High Commissioner, announced his willingness to negotiate. Syria was to become independent. A treaty of friendship and alliance was to take the place of the mandate. The rebel leaders returned from exile in triumph. Elections were held. A Syrian delegation proceeded to Paris where negotiations dragged out for months before they were finally brought to a successful conclusion. In December 1936, the newly elected Syrian Parliament resolved unanimously to ratify the treaty. All that was now wanting to put the treaty into force was ratification by the French Chamber. Up to the present it has never been ratified by France and meanwhile more than two years have elapsed. In ever increasing numbers French generals, politicians, and publicists are opposed to its signature. Books are written against it, as well as newspaper and review articles. Meanwhile a sort of interregnum period has set in in Syria. The administration is half mandatory, half independent—a nebulous and intolerable situation for the country itself. Nobody has any

responsibility. If anything happens, the French say: 'There! Now you see that these people are not fit to govern themselves.' The Syrians reply: 'We cannot govern ourselves as long as French "advisers" interfere every moment and as long as French troops occupy the country and compel us to follow a mistaken policy.'

The non-French Europeans in the country ask themselves what aim the French are pursuing. Do they want to take back the promises made in 1936 and remain in the country for ever? Or do they really want to give up the mandate? The French are divided among themselves. The High Commissioner, de Martel, suffered much disapproval from his own people. 'He lost his head,' say some. 'As an opportunist he pursued the policy of the Popular Front as soon as he saw that the Popular Front was coming into power,' say others. In this connection the Under-Secretary of State, Vienot, who negotiated the treaty with the Syrian delegation, comes in for a goodly portion of blame, as does also the Blum Government as a whole. A third trend of opinion professes to see in the German reoccupation of the Rhineland the cause of all the trouble, the French having no longer sufficient troops to garrison Syria, so that the Syrians were in a position to exploit France's weakness. Although this version must be wrong—because de Martel's change of front occurred some days before the reoccupation of the Rhineland—it is possible that from a psychological standpoint that event and the subsequent wails raised by the French Press really had the effect of stiffening the backs of the Syrian delegation in the negotiations. The last explanation of France's change of mind is heard less from the French than from the lips of other persons well acquainted with the country: 'The French are worn out after eighteen years. They have come to see that the mandate cannot be kept in existence for ever, more especially now that England has laid down her mandate in Iraq and granted independence to Egypt.'

This latter view is certainly nearest to the truth. The French mandate has always been hateful to the Syrians. The land was wrested from the Turks by the English and not by the French. Lawrence's 'revolt in the desert' did more to achieve victory than the French regiment of Spahis that was included in



Allenby's army. True, the war was a united effort. French troops fought on the Western Front for the general victory of the Allies as did British troops in the Near East. But subtleties of this kind do not interest the Syrians. They saw the British march into their country. They saw Emir Feisal ruling in Damascus over an independent Syrian State. And then suddenly after the War was over French troops made their appearance, set Feisal aside, and occupied the entire country.

Close bonds of friendship and of racial affinity exist between Syria and Iraq. There are many families in Baghdad who have an uncle in Beirut or a cousin in Damascus. Until twenty years ago the two countries formed parts of one State—the Ottoman empire. The Bedouin tribes of both countries meet in the desert. Stories are told and retold. Although the Iraqi fought for years to secure the abolition of the British mandate, as did the Syrians for the abolition of the French mandate, the exchange of stories and experiences results in the belief that life is better under English than under French rule. There was indeed a British army of occupation. But its presence was practically never seen or felt except when disturbances arose. In Syria, on the other hand, there are Moroccan troops, Indo-Chinese regiments, Spahis, Senegalese, Foreign Legionaries. Far more hated than the foreign troops, however, are the secret police recruited partly among Frenchmen, partly among Syrians, and, above all, among Syrian Christians. A widespread system of spies and informers poisons the atmosphere.

The difficulty experienced by France in finding good colonial officials arises from the same lack of man-power that renders it necessary to employ troops from Africa and eastern Asia. The subject of French officials comes up in the course of every conversation in Syria. A Swiss proffered the following explanation: 'No Frenchman who is doing well will ever voluntarily leave France. He feels happier there than anywhere else in the world. As for those who do not prosper—*eh bien!* They aren't worth so much. They go to the colonies.'

Even if the majority of defamatory stories that are told are exaggerated and possibly even completely unfounded, in the Near East—where baksheesh has been the rule for centuries, and where bad habits of long standing can only be eradicated by

slow and persistent efforts—there ought not to be so much as one grain of truth contained in the rumours; the same feeling of trust should have been created in Syria that has characterized the French administration in Morocco since Lyautey's day.

Despite certain psychological errors on their part, however, the French have a superb constructive achievement to their credit in Syria. Nowhere else in the Near East are to be found such splendid and well-kept roads as in Lebanon and Syria. There are orchards, tobacco plantations, and banana groves, avenues have been laid out, the growing of corn has been promoted, and irrigation has been carried out wherever irrigation was necessary. The harbour of Beirut—twice enlarged—is one of the finest on the Mediterranean. For three thousand years the cedars of Lebanon have been cut down by the various rulers of Syria from Solomon the temple-builder to the Turks in the twentieth century. Only forty cedars are said to have survived, like specimens in a museum. The French have been the first and the only rulers of the country to start afforestation both in Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon. It is a wearisome task that will bring no result for decades to come. Factories are being built. The country is healthy and clean. The French schools are unequalled in the Near East save possibly by the American missionary schools.

The change in French public opinion on the subject of the ratification of the treaty placed the Damascus Government in a difficult position. It is a long step from Blum to Daladier. It is said that many members of Daladier's Cabinet as well as the Prime Minister himself are averse from relinquishing Syria. But Communists and Socialists still continue to press for the abolition of the mandate. The irony of the situation lies in the fact that their ideology obliges them to become allies of the Nationalists—an irony that obviously escapes their notice.

By its immediate and unconditional signature of the treaty the Syrian Government threw away all the trumps in its hand. It had won the war that had lasted for eighteen years—a war made up of riots and strikes, disorders, oppression, arrests. And now it is in danger of losing the peace. Paris declared that the treaty required further elucidation. The negotiations over the additional clauses that were to explain the intention of the

treaty took place in Paris during the winter of 1937-8. France now demanded that Damascus should first ratify the additional clauses. Then France would place her signature upon the treaty itself. The points at issue were the future position of French officials, the Statute of the Bank of Syria, the oil concession, and the minorities. The last was the thorniest problem of all. The French Press quite openly demanded that it should be expressly declared at the signature of the treaty that if Syria did not keep her promises France could no longer feel herself bound by it. This would mean a fresh opportunity for France to postpone the final withdrawal of her troops. For minority troubles do not need to be provoked in Syria, they come of themselves.

Two years ago the men at the head of the present Government in Damascus were *the* Nationalists of Syria. But during the long period of waiting for independence more youthful and more radical Nationalists have grown up. The Syrian Government finds itself placed in a difficult position between these newer men and the French demands. It is imperative that the treaty should be ratified since the Syrians will not remain patient for much longer. At the same time it is impossible to sign the additional clauses before the treaty itself has been ratified by France, if the entire country is not to be plunged into fresh disorders, if the present Government is to remain in office. The question is, will France appreciate the difficulties confronting the Government in Damascus? Paris must understand that the present Syrian Government is at least a Government with whom it is possible to negotiate, whereas the substitution of an extreme Nationalist Government would mean that everything would have to be begun over again. Even the opponents of the treaty seem to realize that after the two years' interregnum and the grant of a considerable amount of self-administration a *fait accompli* exists that can hardly be made retrogressive.

Nevertheless it is not merely a question of a *rapprochement* between Paris and Damascus. International politics are also involved. The Syrians are not only passionately interested in the struggle of the Arabs in Palestine (they look upon Palestine as a part of Syria) but they are also firmly convinced that behind French delay lies English influence. 'England does not want Syria to be independent as long as disorder reigns in Palestine.

England does not want to look like the only oppressive Power in the Near East,' is what is said time and again to sceptical foreigners. And it is this that gives a special fervour to the demonstrations of sympathy with the Palestinian Arabs. If Palestine and Syria are fundamentally an entity, then England and France also form an entity in their common character as Arab mandatories. The visitor will realize the truth of this statement if he walks through the shady, covered-in bazaars of Damascus on some hot day. No sound of hammering comes from the booths in the street of the metalworkers. There is no beating of leather in the stalls of the shoemakers, no whirring of sewing machines. Shutters are drawn down everywhere in front of the booths. A dismal sight. Silent men in white flowing robes and turbans pass along the silent streets. 'Lots of police,' whispers a Syrian lad into the ear of the traveller. A strike has been proclaimed as a protest against the arrival of the new British Commission in Palestine. At the same time this strike testifies to the profound discontent with conditions in Syria itself as well as to the people's indifference to their own economic welfare. For each day the strike lasts costs the strikers their daily income and increases the poverty of an already poor country.

French policy in Syria, however, is not influenced only by regard for British interests, but also by regard for Italian interests, and thus in a twofold sense. After the conclusion of the Anglo-Italian treaty in the spring of 1938, Franco-Italian conversations appeared to be about to begin. The postponement of the ratification of the treaty with Syria was therefore based on the further argument that the 'Syrian problem' must also be discussed with Italy. 'This too!' said the Syrians, who are convinced that in all such negotiations whether with Turks, English, or Italians they come off worst. After the feeling between Rome and Paris had deteriorated again, the French once more adopted the alternative point of view—fear of Italian expansion and of the possibility that if they left Syria the Italians would enter it. Georges Roux has expressed this feeling in the following words: 'Italy appears as the first candidate. Its intrigues throughout the Near East—where it pursues its policy of inciting the Islamic world against the European, and at the same time wishes to be

regarded as protector of Catholicism—are innumerable. Fascist Rome, it is clear, does not fear inconsistency. Its present attitude is, unfortunately, destructive, rather than constructive.' It may be observed as a commentary on these words that in a country that is so full of inconsistencies as is Syria a policy that contradicts itself has perhaps a better chance of success than the consistent policy pursued by the French.

Confronted by the dilemma arising out of the threefold desire of the French to please England, keep out Italy, and at the same time to keep all the plums in the Syrian pudding for themselves, the Syrians do not appear to have much prospect of success. A single factor will work in their favour in the future if not to-day—the realization that must come to the French sooner or later that Syria will continue to fight until it has won its freedom, and that, even if she does want to keep all the plums in the pudding, it would be better for France to come to an agreement quickly and in a friendly fashion rather to have as an ally in the long run a country that is exhausted and enervated by long-standing quarrels.

#### THE SANJAK OF ALEXANDRETTA BECOMES THE HATAY

One of the questions that remained unsettled in the Treaty of Lausanne was that of the delimitation of the frontier between northern Syria and Turkey, despite the fact that the frontiers of the mandatory territory of Syria had been fixed by the League of Nations without the assent of the Turks. In 1920, while the fighting between the Turks and the French was still in progress, Mustafa Kemal declared publicly that the frontier between Syria and Turkey was the Orontes. This would have meant that not only Alexandretta and Antioch, but also Aleppo, were Turkish. There is no doubt whatsoever that a large part of the inhabitants of these districts has been Turkish from time immemorial. A hundred years ago Hammer-Purgstall said: 'The inhabitants of the country round Haleb, west of Antioch, and eastwards towards the Euphrates, are Turks, Kurds, and Arabs from many different tribes.' Before the War Gertrude Bell stated that the frontier of the Arabic-speaking district passed through Antioch. At the beginning of the nineteen twenties the Turks

were nevertheless not powerful enough to secure the fulfilment of their demands. But they continued to be troublesome neighbours, and armed bands frequently raided French territory. Sometimes they were greeted with jubilation.

After a journey through northern Syria in 1927 Harold Armstrong wrote as follows:

In the centre of Syria the French have been exceedingly successful; but in the north, whether deliberately or because they have to, they seem to look on the Aleppo area as a buffer state and to realize that the frontier is artificial. It is possible, though I do not wish to malign the French, that the Armenian colonies which are being planted all over this area are convenient for taking the first blow should trouble come from the north.

The whole tendency of northern Syria is Turkish. The methods of rule are Turkish. The money used in Aleppo is Turkish silver, and that used just across the Turkish frontier at such places as Aintab is also old Turkish silver, and this is curious in view of the fact that it is forbidden throughout the whole of Turkey to use anything but paper money.

*Turkish is understood everywhere in north Syria. Frequently when I was treated with some hostility as being a foreigner, as soon as I spoke Turkish I was treated as a friend. I remember on one occasion being roughly stopped by a fat policeman, and as soon as I spoke to him in Turkish he literally fell on my neck, and when he knew that I had been with the Gendarmerie in Skutari he begged me to tell him all the news of Stamboul and the Bosphorus, and I said:*

'But you are a Syrian. You wear Syrian uniform and take Syrian pay.' And he replied stoutly: 'I 'am a Turk;' and all the other police in the post declared: 'We are all Turks here.'

... Commercially it is the same thing. Aleppo is slowly dying. ... It was the great centre of the caravan trade. Caravans came from the Black Sea coast, from Anatolia and the Caucasus, from south Russia and Persia and from Arabia and Baghdad and even Egypt, and in the covered bazaars of Aleppo the merchants did their trade. The new frontier has stopped all that.<sup>1</sup>

That Aleppo is slowly dying is certain. In any case it is a predominantly Arab town. Even during the Crusades it remained Arab. It lies round the citadel of Saladin like a vast shallow bowl. On the edges of the bowl the suburbs gradually merge into green pistachio woods. In the middle of the bowl like the cone

<sup>1</sup> Journal of the Central Asian Society, Vol. XV, 1928, pp. 421-2.

of a volcano there rises up a sandy, crumbling, hill on which stands the citadel. The citadel is a town in itself—a ruined town with mosques, knightly halls, stables, and dungeons. Fields and patches of cultivated ground lie between the ruins and among them stand the barracks of the French army. From the top is a view over the stony sea that is the city, with little cupolas, minarets, and green trees half hidden in the courtyards of the houses. Over the city hangs a thick blue mist and far away in the distance—so far that they can hardly be descried—lie the lofty Turkish mountains, faint and transparent.

The entrance is the most beautiful part of the citadel. A heavy tower stands on the outer side of the moat, another rises up on the inner, and between them is the bridge carried on delicate arches. Inside the citadel there are high, vaulted passages leading upwards from one iron door to another, always turning at right angles round the corners, and so wide that four horses could certainly walk abreast. The outer towers built of square-cut cubes of stone are finely proportioned and of a beautiful colour—a deep ochre almost approximating to the colour of Siena clay. The window frames of black and yellow stone stand out like jewels from the broad yellow façade. The outward tower of the gate has rounded edges whilst the corners of the broader tower behind the bridge are sharply angular—a fine contrast and an intensifying of the defensive strength of the citadel.

Opinion is divided among the inhabitants of Aleppo. As Arabs they belong to Syria. As citizens of Aleppo and particularists they hate Damascus. As merchants they bemoan the loss of the Turks.

The French are also not wholly united in their feelings. They are tired of the northern frontier squabbles. Are they to fight against the Turks for these rebellious ungrateful Syrians who have already occasioned the loss of so many French lives? Never. In 1926 de Jouvenel went to Angora. He championed Syrian interest to the utmost of his ability. The contested frontier town of Payash on the branch line to Alexandretta was ceded to the Turks. The Sanjak of Alexandretta was given complete cultural and considerable administrative autonomy. Since then the Sanjak like the Jebel Druze and the State of the Alawiyin has been independent—under French supervision.

Up to 1936 all went well. Then the Franco-Syrian treaty was concluded by which it was proposed to abolish the small independent States and to construct two 'great' States—Syria and Lebanon. Syria was to have the Sanjak of Alexandretta. Turkey protested. Under the French, the Turks said, the safety and the autonomy of our Turkish brothers was respected, but by the Syrians it will not be safeguarded.

Negotiations were carried on in Paris and at the League of Nations in Geneva. In January 1937 the Turks massed troops on the frontier. Fearing an invasion the French gave way—that is to say, the French in Paris and Geneva gave way. The French in Alexandretta and Antioch, on the other hand, worked grimly to retain the Sanjak for Syria and for France. For this reason throughout 1937 and in the spring of 1938 there were constantly renewed Turkish protests and threats, constantly renewed concessions and promises in Paris, and recurrent incidents in the Sanjak. Although they were not consulted, the Syrians also protested.

The League of Nations was required to display its capacity for mediation and for peaceful adjustment by preparing and carrying out a plebiscite in the Sanjak. At the time when the League Commission arrived in Antioch towards the end of April 1936 I was travelling through the hot and swampy plain of Antioch along one of the superb asphalt roads built by the French that leads into the mountains. Young and well-tended trees planted at regular intervals alongside the road\* promised that there would be a shady avenue in the future. After crossing a river, the monotony of the landscape was broken. On either side of the road there were trees, gardens, mulberry bushes, olives, orange groves, tobacco plantations, light, succulent, welcome verdure. Isolated houses made their appearance. The River Orontes, the cause of this miraculous fertility, rushed torrentially past, greeny-yellow in colour. The air was filled with the sweet scent of acacias and orange blossom, roses and stocks. Huge water wheels turned on the river edges, taller even than the poplars and ancient willows. The houses on the Orontes have wooden balconies jutting out over the water like lake-dwellings. The inhabitants sit in cafés or on their private verandas and beneath their chairs and tables runs the rapid, swirling river. Antioch



is a little country town that was formerly the capital of the Seleucid empire. Its prosperity lasted until the time of the Crusades and until the 19th of May 1268, when the Mamelukes broke in, massacring seventeen thousand Christians, and either selling as slaves or carrying into captivity another hundred thousand.

The most noticeable features of Antioch to the eyes of a traveller from the interior of Syria were the many signs such as 'Hotel Angora', 'Café Hatay', 'Karakol'—the latter being the Turkish word for 'police'. A Turkish flag floated over a large building. Obviously Antioch was a Turkish town. No sooner did that thought arise than it was dispelled by a loud and repeated sound of rockets being fired off. People came streaming out from a doorway—a procession was just breaking up. The Greek Orthodox community was celebrating Easter. The whole town was *en fête* and the streets were filled with people in their best clothes. Could Antioch be a Greek town after all?

In the only hotel that is fit for European habitation every room was occupied. The League Commission had its headquarters in Antioch which is the summer capital of the Sanjak. The impartiality of the Commission was to be safeguarded by avoidance of all contact with other people. 'Impartiality!' a Lebanese observed sarcastically some days later. 'These men do not know the country nor its inhabitants. They cannot speak either Arabic or Turkish. Their impartiality is only another word for total ignorance.'

The Turks declare that eighty per cent of the population of the Hatay are Turks. This seems to have been the case before the War. Meanwhile the French have transferred population and settled refugees—chiefly Armenians and Circassians. French statistics are not entirely consistent as to the numbers and racial composition of the population. *Le Temps* said in 1937 that out of a total population of two hundred and twenty thousand there were eighty-five thousand Turks, twenty-three thousand Armenians, a hundred and seven thousand Arabs, and some others. A French officer in Antioch gave a different estimate. He said the total population numbered two hundred and one thousand six hundred and thirty-seven, of which seventy-four thousand three hundred and two were Turks, sixty thousand and eighty-

two Alawiyin, twenty-six thousand three hundred and fifty-five Armenians, twenty-three thousand three hundred and fifty-eight Sunnite Arabs, thirteen thousand seven hundred and nine Greek Orthodox, one thousand seven hundred and thirty-six Circassians, one thousand six hundred and forty foreigners, and four hundred and fifty-five Jews.

In Geneva Turkey and France fought bitterly over the conduct of the plebiscite. It was at first proposed that the population of the Sanjak should inscribe their names on separate registers according to their race or their religion. The French wished to test the accuracy of the entries. They knew each individual and their secret service had always been good. False entries were to be severely punished with imprisonment up to twenty years. Woe to him who wrote himself down a Turk when he was of the Alawiyin, or to a Turk who by bribery or threats sought to induce a Syrian to place his name on any other than the Arab register! In the spring the Turks were successful after a hard-fought diplomatic battle in securing that each individual should be at liberty to place his name upon whatever register he chose. Each had the choice between seven differently coloured cards bearing the names:

Turks  
Alawiyin  
Arabs  
Armenians  
Greek Orthodox  
Kurds  
Other Communities

Who was going to vote for whom? That was the unanswerable question. The Armenians had fled from Turkey where they had formerly been massacred. Nevertheless there were Armenians who were more afraid of the religious fanaticism of the Syrians than of present-day Turkey. It was the same with the Kurds. In Turkey they were compelled to keep pace with a progressive civilization. This did not please them. Many preferred to be killed rather than to submit. Nevertheless they were continually quarrelling with the Syrians. The Greek Orthodox? They were divided against themselves. The higher clergy were pro-Greek and nationalist, the lower Syrian in feeling. The Alawiyin

fought for autonomy in their own former little State and against the centralizing efforts of the Government in Damascus. They disliked the Syrian rule. They disliked Turkish rule. They were alone in their complete acceptance and approval of the French mandate.

There remained the Turks. Let it not be supposed that they were united! There were supporters of the new Turkey—the Kemalists. There were pious Moslem Turks who hated the anti-religious policy pursued by Angora. Headgear had become a symbol of political allegiance. The wearer of the fez would not vote for Turkey. The wearer of a hat was a fervent supporter of Ataturk's policy. And between these two extremes there were the many who wore the Basque beret after the French fashion as a badge of indecision. Before the polling-day they enjoyed this advantage—they were not beaten to death as happened at the end of March to the wearer of a hat in Alexandretta. On the other hand they feared to be beaten by the victorious party after the election as a punishment for their indifference.

This indecisiveness and fear of the future were the reason why the questioning stranger usually met with evasive glances and the stereotyped reply: 'Politics do not interest me. It is all the same to me who wins the elections.'

We sat together with a young man on a wooden balcony overhanging the Orontes. The scent of flowering trees came across the rushing water from a little island in midstream. The young man had a Turkish name. During the War his family went to live on a Greek island, or possibly fled there. His mother was a 'Bible woman', a Protestant, and a close friend of the English missionary. He himself had spent four years in America at a university. He was anti-religious. The family income was derived from 'our village', one of the many poor villages where Arab peasants work for the benefit of former Turkish land-owners. He said: 'We do not want to live under either Turkish or Syrian rule. And least of all under French rule. We want to be independent.' He added: 'The French do everything to bring about an agreement between the Arabs and the Alawiyyin, to make a united front against the Turks. And Kemal Ataturk sends all Turks who were born in the Sanjak home again in order to make propaganda and to vote for him.'

Alexander the Great founded the little city of Alexandretta. He wanted to gather together the entire trade of Asia Minor in this eastern corner of the Mediterranean. His dream was short-lived. One of his own generals built the port of Seleucia through which trade subsequently made its way to the sea. Immediately before the War Alexandretta was to have experienced renewed prosperity as the terminus of the Baghdad railway. French, English, and Germans worked against each other. Constantinople did nothing—it was too weak.

Alexandretta to-day is a hot, sleepy, friendly little town lying between the deep blue sea and the lofty wall of the Amanus mountains that cut off the coast from the interior. On the menu in the clean little hotel by the sea the word 'Syrie' had been carefully struck out from beneath the word 'Alexandretta' both in Latin and Arabic characters in April 1938. The town is sleepy and friendly except when the younger inhabitants embark on politics. On May 3rd the electoral registers were opened for inscription. The next day stump orators were haranguing the crowd from the public fountains and terraces. It was a question of winning the Alawiyin vote for Turkey or for Syria. The result of this flood of oratory and propaganda was seven severely wounded men—four Turks and three Greeks. Three days later two Syrian policemen were killed in Antioch. Propaganda and oratory continued. Many illiterate peasants who were strangers to politics gave their votes, it was alleged, to those who brought them from the country into the town and gave them a day's amusement.

Incidents continued until towards the end of June, 1938, a real settlement was reached at the same time as a Franco-Turkish treaty of friendship. In the early days of September the result of this accord was shown in the meeting of a constituent assembly of the 'Republic of Hatay' in the presence of a representative of the High Commissioner in Beirut, the Turkish Minister Plenipotentiary and the consular corps in Alexandretta. No representative of the Government at Damascus was present. The following resolutions were passed:

The Hatay is a distinct Republican State upheld by a Turkish majority and enjoying absolute independence in its interior affairs. The seat of government is Antioch.

All citizens of the Hatay of whatsoever race or religion have equal rights before the law.

The legislative power rests with the National Assembly elected for four years and composed of 40 members.

The Head of the State is elected by the National Assembly for five years.

An Executive Council composed of a President and four members shall be responsible to the Assembly. The President shall be designated by the Head of the State.

Public order shall be maintained by a force of police and gendarmes, the strength of which shall not exceed 1,500.

The flag of the Hatay shall be a white crescent and a star on a red background.<sup>1</sup>

Tayfour Seukmen, the first President of the Hatay, sent a message to the National Assembly in Angora in which he indicated that Kemalism was the basic principle of the new State.

Of the new President of the Hatay *Le Temps* reports that he is a large landowner in the Sanjak who has lived for the last five years in Turkey as parliamentary delegate for the district of Adalia and that he was a personal friend of Kemal Ataturk.

The future development of this tiny new Republic along Turkish lines has thus been rendered possible without open annexation. Turkey has taken another step along the road leading to the fulfilment of the demands made by Kemal Ataturk in 1920. From now on Aleppo has been deprived not merely of its hinterland but also of its harbour. It is surrounded on two sides by Turkish territory and can only regain its prosperity—at least in an economic sense—with Turkish help.

## PALESTINE AND TRANSJORDAN

Palestine and Transjordan form a single entity. Together with Syria they constitute a further entity. Partition into numerous States is unnatural. It is as if southern England were to be parcelled out among Asiatic conquerors—Sussex under a Japanese mandate, Hampshire under a Chinese, and Dorset again under a Japanese mandate, but ruled over by a so-called 'native' prince from the Highlands of Scotland. There might also be a small State for the Plymouth Brethren in which they

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, 9th September, 1938.

could live free from terrorization by evilly intentioned native politicians in Westminster. There would be Customs frontiers between all these States. The citizens of Winchester and Brighton, Petersfield and Dorchester, would nevertheless cross these frontiers secretly by night. It is the same in Syria. The local population calls Palestine and Transjordan 'Southern Syria' and thereby testifies to the unity of the two lands. Foreign observers admit that a genuine economic development of both countries will only be possible when the Customs, administrative and State frontiers have been abolished.

The essential unity of Syria is shown in many ways and not least, curiously enough, in the religious and tribal particularism characteristic of Palestine as well as Syria. The social structure is the same. The land is in the hands of a few landlords, and the agricultural labourers—fellaheen—are poor and helpless and do as the sheikhs tell them. The sheikhs tell them to do what the great landed proprietors—the effendim—wish. The one hundred and twenty rich propertied families are the same in both northern and southern Syria. For example, the Sursok family of Beirut, which gives feasts like those formerly given by the Caliphs, owned over ten thousand acres of land in the plain of Jezreel in Palestine until they sold it to the Zionist Committee. The Ottoman Government found these great landowners very useful in the task of government and therefore strengthened their power. It thus came about that in the 'eighties of the last century many villages that were in arrears with the payment of their taxes were sold privately as a whole to the Sursok family at a price equal to one thousand pounds per village.

The common people throughout the country are no less related and intermarried than are the great landowners. They are the backbone of all rebellions. They steal unobserved across frontiers and afford each other asylum. The barbed-wire fence that was put up between Lebanon and Palestine in 1938 will probably not make much difference to this state of affairs. If rebellion breaks out in Syria, both supporters and leaders are to be found in Transjordan and Palestine. If the rebellion is in Palestine, they are hidden in Syria. Even during the brief periods when the French and British High Commissioners on both sides of the frontier work together it seldom happens that

arrests are made of 'wanted' persons. At times when Franco-British relations are strained rebels enjoy practically unlimited freedom. Even when the rebel leaders are banished from both mandated territories they only enlarge the frontiers of the vast realm of Arab solidarity by settling in Baghdad or Cairo and opening offices for the collection of money, the acquisition of arms, and the organization of smuggling on a grand scale. A journey in the company of a native chauffeur is very instructive in regard to the highly developed technique of smuggling—but let us not betray Pan-Arab secrets!

The various nationalist Arab committees and congresses were always agreed in demanding the whole and not the part. Delegates from Palestine champion Syria and those from Syria Palestine. This began at the end of the World War and has remained the same to this day. The demands put forward in 1921 in Geneva by the *Congrès Syrio-Palestinien* were as follows:

1. Recognition of the independence and sovereignty of Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine.
2. The right of these countries to unite under a democratic and parliamentary government and to conclude an alliance with the remaining Arab States.
3. An immediate declaration that the mandate will be given up.
4. The withdrawal of the French and English armies of occupation from Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine.
5. The withdrawal of the Balfour Declaration on the subject of the Jewish Home in Palestine.

During the last few years Point 5 has become the most important. But as a whole the programme remains unaltered after eighteen years.

Notwithstanding the essential unity of the three States and also the fact that they are all mandated territories each has been given an administration entirely different from those of its neighbours. Monarchical government was instituted in Transjordan while Syria and Lebanon were established as parliamentary republics. In Palestine the mandatory Power governs directly, almost as if Palestine were a Crown Colony, though with the assistance of numerous native officials.

England has usually obtained good results from the establishment of dynastic government even when the ruler has been a stranger to the country and incapable. Personal government is in accord with Arab tradition and character. Under a legislative assembly and a constitution the Arab is at a loss whereas under the rule of a monarch, be his qualities good or bad, he knows where he is. In Palestine, however, a dynastic solution to the problem is impossible since Palestine, as the English so charmingly say, is an 'experiment'. Three political demands have to be reconciled one with the other:

1. The establishment of an Arab State in accordance with the wish of the population.
2. The safeguarding of imperial interests: land and air routes to India, oil line to the Mediterranean.
3. The creation of a Jewish National Home in conformity with the Balfour Declaration.

The example of Iraq proves that the first and second points may be more or less reconciled. Only experience can teach how the first and third demands may be brought into harmony.

Probably there was no Englishman occupying a prominent post in Palestine who did not have serious doubts as soon as he became acquainted with the feeling in the country. It is no small achievement for these officials to have worked loyally for twenty long years at the hopeless task set to them. Nor is it wholly fair to ascribe it to 'imperial interests' alone. Imperial interests can be safeguarded without Zionist help, as has been shown in other countries. It is too often forgotten when criticizing British policy in Palestine that the English are a religious people—not only the man in the street but also the Governor and the High Commissioner and the Prime Minister. Many of them know whole chapters of the Bible virtually by heart. The Bible and the historic events that have taken place in the Holy Land are real and living to them. They still think in terms of the Old Testament—almost as the Jews do.

In spite of all, the English have never ceased to hope that Jews and Arabs would learn to live side by side. They could allay their doubts by saying that, after all, rivalries have at all times existed even between other elements in the population. The



quarrels between the Christian sects, for example, and their various rights in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, are as absurd as they are tragic. The Greek Orthodox Christians have the right to clean the church, whilst Armenians, Catholics, and Russian Orthodox have the right to hold services at appointed hours. Each sect is suspicious and hostile to the others. Nevertheless they band together when it is a question of preventing Protestant English architects from safeguarding the venerable structure from inevitable collapse. At first sight these quarrels do not seem to be in any way different from that between the Arabs and the Jews over the question as to whether the Jews may or may not bring praying stools with them for their rites at the Wailing Wall. Moreover, the Jews are continually disputing among themselves. The ancient communities of the Sephardim and the Ashkenazim regard all new arrivals with conservative disapproval, and among the Zionists every tendency is represented, from Communism to Nationalism.

All attempts at reconciliation, however, have failed. It is a struggle between two different languages and two different mentalities, and each demands all. The Jews have, it is true, been obliged to content themselves with the restricted terms of the Balfour Declaration: 'Establishment of a National Home for the Jewish people in Palestine.' But they have never really abandoned their own formula: 'Restoration of Palestine as a National Home for Jews.' That is to say, to gain a majority and therewith the decisive power within the land itself. Everything has been shipwrecked on this rock. For every attempt made by England to induce the two races to collaborate and to set up a Palestinian Council as the predecessor to a local Government has only seemed to make the antagonistic points of view clearer. The Arabs want to perpetuate the existing Arab majority while the Jews, looking to the future, do not want to let themselves be designated as a minority. No compromise is possible when each side will not be content with less than the whole. This fact underlay all the disturbances that occurred when Jewish immigration was still weak and the creation of a Jewish majority seemed to lie in a vague and distant future.

In 1933 the situation changed in a twofold manner. Not only did a vast number of Jewish immigrants arrive in the country,

but also a great amount of Jewish money. Until then Jewish development had proceeded quietly and systematically, together with a widespread and successful scheme of colonization. Now there suddenly arose a boom in building and industry such as that which took place during the period of the South Sea Bubble. It was not only unsound from an economic standpoint. Such arguments did not interest the Arabs. But it threatened to alter the balance of power. The fifty to sixty thousand Jewish immigrants annually as compared with barely ten thousand in earlier years threatened to change the minority into a majority within the near future—all the more so because, as a result of the first-rate hygienic and medical arrangements in the Jewish colonies, the infant mortality is extremely small as compared with that among the Arabs. For the moment, however, what seemed to the Arabs even more dangerous was the fact that the increasing financial and economic superiority of the Zionists would soon render the existence of a Jewish majority unnecessary in order to make the Jews predominant in the country. The power of the great Arab landowners is diminishing, whilst that of the bankers and owners of factories and electrical plant is increasing.

In the autumn of 1935 started the disorders that may one day be looked upon by future historians of Palestine as the beginning of the final struggle. The actual happenings are still fresh to the mind—attacks by Arabs, cutting of telephone wires, blowing up of railway lines, damage to oil pipe-lines—a guerilla warfare just as it was in the good old days of the World War. Strong counter-measures were taken by England; troops were sent out, courts-martial set up. In all the Arab and in certain of the Moslem countries there were demonstrations of sympathy with the Palestinian Arabs. A proposal for settlement was made by the Arab kings that resulted in an armistice and the dispatch of a British Royal Commission—the Peel Commission—to investigate the situation. The Commission did its work slowly and thoroughly. It returned to England and continued to work. On 8th July 1937 it published a report covering very many pages. The British Government accepted the proposals made in the report. Of these the chief are: The triple partition of Palestine into a Jewish State, an Arab State and a

district that is to remain under direct British mandatory administration and that includes all the places that are regarded as equally holy by Arabs, Christians, and Jews, as well as having an outlet to the sea. The Arab State is to be united with the existing Transjordan to form a new Arab State.

Since the virtually unknown country of Transjordan has played an important part ever since in all proposed solutions of the problem, it is necessary to take a glance at this wild desert land. Once more we shall encounter our friend Mr. St. John Philby and enjoy his refreshing candour. His account of the establishment of the State of Transjordan is so excellent that it must be quoted here:

The promises of the Lord to Moses, made, I believe, in the year 1451 B.C. or thereabouts, were less difficult to ignore than the promises of His Majesty's Government to King Husain in A.D. 1916. It was, of course, somewhat inconvenient that Mr. Balfour had specifically renewed the promises of the Lord in 1917, but the matter had to be adjusted as best it could. . . . The British Government had secured a mandate for the administration of Palestine from the League of Nations, but the League of Nations, not being quite up to date in its geography, adopted a definition of that country which Moses, and more particularly Reuben and Gad, could have approved without any qualms of conscience—one, that is, which included Trans-Jordan. But King Husain claimed the whole country in virtue of the promises of 1916, and the Zionists, pointing to the 1917 promises, claimed no less. A compromise was dictated by Mr. Churchill after a little juggling with certain troublesome geographical facts, and it was laid down that, while Palestine for the purposes of the Balfour Declaration meant only approximately half of Palestine as understood by the Lord, by Moses, and by the League of Nations, at the same time that half, though in geographical fact it lies well to the south of Syria, should be deemed for the purposes of all discussions with King Husain to lie to the west of that country. [*This last refers to the terms of the MacMahon agreement, that the territory west of Damascus should be excluded from the Arab State that was to be formed.*] . . . The curtain rises at Cairo in the days of full-dress conferences. Mr. Churchill, Secretary of State for the Colonies, is foregathered in semi-regal state at the Semiramis Hotel, on the banks of the Nile, with so many advisers that even his fertile brain can think of nothing better to do with them than shut them up in little groups in different rooms to play at being sub-committees and to prepare schemes. Meanwhile, along the long derelict southern section of the Hijaz

Railway, the Amir Abdullah is hastening northward with a motley force, sworn to drive the French out of Syria into the sea. He arrives first at Maan and then at Amman, and a nervous Palestine telegraphs the news of this development to Cairo, where a sub-committee immediately sits to digest the situation. It is unanimously agreed that Abdullah must be ejected. It is pointed out that, desirable as such a course is, it cannot be effected without troops, and that there are no troops available, and that, if there were troops, it would be out of the question to start another war just yet. Abdullah, therefore, for the moment holds the trump cards, and Mr. Churchill finally decides that the simplest course would be to pay him liberally to keep quiet.

These events occurred in March 1921 and Abdullah became ruler of Trans-Jordan as from 1st April, with a monthly salary of £5,000, payable by the British taxpayer.<sup>1</sup>

The Palestine Government sent a staff of seven political officers and the new Transjordan Government was set on its feet. Nevertheless it was not long before incidents occurred. An attempt was made by brigands from Transjordan to assassinate General Gouraud in Syria; a Jewish village was attacked; a minor defeat was inflicted upon British troops. Mr. Abrahamson, the senior British agent in Transjordan, gave a pass for Palestine to a Syrian rebel in Amman. The rebel was arrested on his arrival in Palestine and handed over to the French authorities. Mr. Abrahamson was away at the time that the news of this betrayal reached Amman. But his deputy Peake Bey (to-day known far and wide as Peake Pasha) was seized by an enraged mob and compelled to listen for several hours to a discussion over the best way to kill him. On 21st September 1921, however, he was set at liberty.

Meanwhile London and Cairo realized that things were not going well in Transjordan. If they could have had their way, they would have got rid of Abdullah; but that presented great difficulties. Hence Mr. Churchill evolved the brilliant idea of sending Lawrence to Amman. Lawrence's dislike of officials was well known. He dismissed all the advisers that had been sent to Amman by the Palestine Government with the exception of Peake, and destroyed all their files. Then he restored order in the country. His skilled hand soon accomplished the task. Once order was restored Lawrence grew weary of Transjordan and

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of the Central Asian Society*, Vol. XI, 1924, pp. 298, 301.

proposed Philby as his successor. In November 1921 Philby reached Amman.

Lawrence and Philby strove for a Transjordan Government wholly independent of the Palestine Government. That was not Abdullah's aim. He felt himself safe under the protection of the British Air Force, and began to rule as he had been taught to rule by his father in Mecca. Philby writes of:

. . . an orgy of maladministration. The treasury was robbed right and left, essential services were allowed to suffer by non-payment of the salaries of their personnel, Government lands were distributed among the Amir's favourite sheikhs without any corresponding advantage to the public exchequer; even private owners were expropriated for the benefit of those who coveted their holdings . . . the equivalent of nine and a half years' normal taxation was wrung out of the peasantry by the Amir in the course of three years, in many cases in the course of only two.<sup>1</sup>

In 1923 a rebellion took place. Abdullah sat booted and spurred in his palace ready for flight. Philby and the Royal Air Force saved his throne for him.

The maladministration, and above all the heavy financial burden, resulted after a time in the Palestine Government again taking Transjordan in hand. The dream of independence was over. Philby left. New advisers came from Palestine. Emir Abdullah was in the main excluded from the business of government. A constitution and the *Pax Britannica* were introduced, and a treaty of alliance was concluded with England.

Transjordan for the most part continues in its primitive state. No Zionists have come there to build factories or to irrigate and make fertile desert and steppe. England looks upon it merely as an important strategical transit district both for the oil-line from Kirkuk to Haifa and the air line to the East. Moreover, since 1925 Transjordan has possessed the port of Akaba which is of value for the safeguarding of the Suez Canal and the Red Sea. Every now and then the death is reported from Transjordan of a British Air Force officer. It would therefore appear that the country is still not behaving in a wholly seemly manner.

<sup>1</sup> Journal of the Central Asian Society, Vol. XI, 1924, p. 305.

Transjordan has only become an object of 'interest' since its relation to the Palestinian problem came up for discussion. The first proposal of this kind was made in 1936 by the most zealous protagonist of the Zionist cause in the Upper House, Lord Melchett. He desired to see Transjordan opened up to Jewish immigration. At that time the Emir Abdullah was in London and did not seem altogether opposed to the scheme. The Peel plan for partition proposed the exact contrary—the unification of the Arab countries and the exclusion of the Jews from them. Again the Emir Abdullah made no objection. He knew that the greater the State the greater the State revenues. The inhabitants of Transjordan on the other hand are absolutely opposed to the Melchett plan. And although they wish to be united with their racial brothers in Palestine, they have also rejected the Peel plan because the Palestinian Arabs have rejected it.

The Emir Abdullah is probably the only person who looks upon partition with favour. The Jews are divided among themselves. In principle, however, they are opposed to it. Nevertheless, because they know that it is only with England's help and under England's protection that they have any hope whatsoever of seeing their wishes fulfilled, and also because their most influential leader, Chaim Weizmann, is resolved upon co-operation with England, they have expressed their readiness to accept the plan as a basis for negotiations in the course of which they hope to see improvements introduced into it. The Arabs alike in Syria, Palestine, and Iraq are one and all opposed to the plan. The hopes entertained by many Englishmen that the impracticability of partition would compel Jews and Arabs to agree upon a better solution have not been fulfilled.

The English themselves, and especially those who live in Asia Minor and know the conditions, are without exception against the proposed partition. That is the astonishing thing which strikes a traveller in the Arab countries over and over again. The English there call it a paper solution that can never be put into force. This is the opinion of officials of the Palestinian Government as well as of members of the British police force, of English business men and of diplomatists in the neighbouring countries. Sir Ronald Storrs, who as a former Governor of Jerusalem has drawn up one of the most informative and impartial surveys of

the Palestine problem, commented on the Report of the Royal Commission as follows:

The Palestine twins are shown to be temperamentally irreconcilable, and the local practitioners incompetent; the general applause being reserved for the brilliant, if ultimately irresponsible, Consulting Specialists. Nevertheless, to a stranger present throughout the Debates in 1936 there was in 1937 one startling change of tone: the proved difficulties of preventing a recurrence of outrage and humiliation had at last established the existence of an Arab cause.<sup>1</sup>

After the publication of the Peel Report the witches' cauldron began slowly to simmer again. At first this showed itself merely by isolated acts of violence. These gradually increased in number. The English suppressed them and otherwise did nothing. The impression arose that London wanted to gain time, so that feelings and passions should spend their force. They did so to the accompaniment of increasing bloodshed. At the end of December 1937 it was finally announced that a second Commission would be sent out. After that there was no move for two months. In January, however, the former Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri-es-Said Pasha appeared in London, evidently bringing with him a proposal for mediation—though this was believed not to bear the approval of the then Iraq Government. At the end of February 1938 the members of the new Commission were finally appointed. Their chairman was Sir John Woodhead. Again a period of inactivity set in. At the end of April the Woodhead Commission arrived in Palestine armed with instructions to make further proposals based on the Peel Plan. But the Arabs had rejected the Peel Plan and therefore did not appear before the Commission, which only heard evidence from Jews and British officials. The tension was so great that the members of the Commission could not move about freely. A stroll alone through the old city of Jerusalem was an impossibility. A visit to the northern districts of Palestine could only be undertaken with a strong military escort and after preliminary cleaning-up operations had been carried out by troops.

The Commission left Palestine. Its impressions were veiled in silence. It set to work in London to draft its conclusions.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Ronald Storrs: *Orientalism*, p. 455.

The task again took a very long time. In the middle of October 1938 the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Malcolm MacDonald, announced that he hoped to have the Commission's report in his hands by the end of the month. *The Times* insinuated delicately that, notwithstanding the definite limitation set to its work, the Commission would perhaps reach the conclusion that partition was impossible.

The situation in Palestine had meanwhile become untenable. Although in the spring of 1938 it had still been possible to speak of guerrilla warfare, in the autumn a regular popular rising must be recorded. The banishment of the Mufti from Jerusalem did not diminish his activity. On the contrary. In Lebanon he was far freer to direct propaganda and to arouse a fighting spirit in his people. A Committee of Thirteen was set up in Baghdad for the defence of Palestine. The former chief leader of the guerrilla bands, Fauzi-ed-din-Kaukaji, who had been obliged to flee from Palestine, conducted the military operations from Baghdad and sent strategical plans. His brother attended to the dispatch of arms. Apart from a few old Turkish rifles all the weapons were quite new. A company of three hundred youthful volunteers in Baghdad was ready to carry out the Committee's orders and to maintain communications with the rebels.

The number of the rebels increased daily. For years the townsfolk had held back from participation in revolts because they knew that a permanent state of guerrilla warfare meant the destruction of all opportunities of trade. Now they too came forward. In August the rebel leaders gave the order that all Arabs in Palestine were to lay aside the fez and to replace it by the *keffieh*. For the *keffieh* symbolized unity. Many Europeans laughed. Of what importance, they said, is a change of head-gear? It is in truth more than a symbol. It is a sort of disguise for war purposes. Formerly the countryfolk—that is to say, the rebels—were easy to recognize by their headcloths when they came to town. All now look alike. And it is impossible to arrest everybody. The correspondent of *The Times* wrote a very serious word of warning on October 5th:

'Experienced observers believe that unless the Government can quickly reach a solution which will give some satisfaction to



Arab national aspirations, it may be necessary to reconquer Palestine.'

Despite its importance, Bethlehem had already been abandoned by the British troops. It could now be said of Palestine what was said in Syria of the Gesireh: Taxes cannot be collected, the officials cannot carry out their duties, the administration is helpless.

One day in August the Colonial Secretary, Mr. MacDonald, unexpectedly arrived in Palestine by aeroplane. At the beginning of October, amidst the impassioned debates over the Munich Agreement and Mr. Chamberlain's policy, he initiated several further measures. The Foreign Minister of Iraq, Taufik-es-Suweidi, was invited to London. He is a blue-eyed, red-blond man in whom intelligence is mingled with humour. He had already settled many difficulties. In 1927 when he was Prime Minister he had even managed to settle the vexed frontier question with ibn Saud.

At the meetings of the League of Nations he has often pleaded Palestine's cause, and it is no secret that Egypt—perhaps also Saudi Arabia—is behind him. In so far as it has become known to the public through summaries in *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph*, his new proposal was as follows:

To create an independent State founded upon lines laid down by a constituent assembly.

The British Government gradually to hand over the administration to the national Government within a definite time-limit, as was done in the case of Iraq.

All inhabitants of Palestine, regardless of race or religion, to be guaranteed full political and civic rights.

Every community to have civic rights, and none to be ranked above another.

Full rights of local administration to be granted to all Arabic and Jewish villages and towns in respect of authority, supervision, and administration, but without curtailment of civic rights.

The number of Jewish inhabitants not to be increased above the present level.

All rights to be guaranteed by the British Government.

All legitimate British interests to be secured. The ultimate aim is to develop a treaty-relationship after the model of Iraq.

Mr. MacDonald continued his efforts. On October 7th Sir

Harold MacMichael, the High Commissioner in Palestine, came to London and strong military reinforcements were sent to Palestine. It was said that the rebellion must first be stamped out in order to avoid an appearance of England's having yielded to force. A British proposal could then be made.

Of the many solutions put forward both by experts and non-experts, Sir Arnold Wilson's is interesting because he was the first to propose the union of Syria and Palestine. Nevertheless it is questionable whether Anglo-French friendship in the East has gone sufficiently far to make such a solution possible. At present it does not look like it. At the meeting in September of the Mandates Commission of the League of Nations the French and British representatives wriggled out of it by making general asseverations and excuses when the Commission sought to discover whether—and to what extent—the French mandatory officials had assisted the English to quell the rebellion. On 10th October *The Times* published a dispatch from its Beirut correspondent in which he declared openly that the French, with memories of England's attitude during the Druze revolt, find pleasure in emphasizing that the affording of an asylum to political refugees has been one of England's most cherished and most sacred principles from time immemorial. *The Times* correspondent then adds:

'The control upon the visitors who resort to the Mufti is regrettably ineffective, and he is free to carry on his intrigues from his Lebanese villa as much as he pleases. Of this laxity he is making full use. Then much more might have been done to check the anti-British campaign in the local Press. . . .'<sup>1</sup>

These words show that, at all events on the spot, Anglo-French friendship is none too firm yet. In Paris and London other feelings may prevail. But the actions of local officials have their own importance and may nullify well-intentioned governmental decisions arrived at in the European cabinets. According to this it does not at present appear possible to count upon a speedy amalgamation of the two mandates under some form of Anglo-French co-operation, the less so since all English hints on the subject of the desirability of closer collaboration are passed over by the French governmental Press in icy silence.

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, 10th October, 1938.

An observer indeed is more likely to gain the impression that through the long dragging-out of the Palestine affair the English wish to prove to the Jews: 'You see we cannot do anything because the opposition of the Arabs is too strong. We can subdue the whole country by bloodshed. But we should not be providing you with a peaceful home in that fashion. For as soon as the strength of our military forces is diminished disorders would break out anew. The last twenty years have shown that.'

The East is the paradise of bargaining and haggling. Although the Arabs declare to-day that, whilst the Jews already living in the country are to be respected, all further immigration is to be forbidden, they might perhaps allow themselves in the course of negotiations to be persuaded to agree to a small immigration quota. That is probably the most that England could obtain for the Jews. The Jews themselves can have no interest in refusing a solution to which the alternative would be continual bloodshed and the destruction of all that has hitherto been achieved. Once more we are confronted by the same old question that has split the ranks of Zionism from its beginnings: Is a State to be established in Palestine to contain all the Jewish population of the world, or at least the greater part of it? Or is Palestine to be simply a symbolic national, cultural, and religious centre for professing Jews throughout the world in the form of a community representative of all human activities from tilling the soil to university life? The impracticability of the former ideal seems to have been proved. But it may be that the Jews will be able to realize the longing expressed in the words *Erez Israel* in a purer form by contenting themselves with the symbol rather than in a materialistic social form that gives predominance to the industrial towns of Jaffa and Haifa.

## IRAQ

Iraq is the only country as yet in which a mandate has given place to independence. In Iraq alone the 'experiment' has proved successful—thanks to especially capable and intuitive English officials, but thanks also to the inborn common sense of the population and the diplomatic skill of King Feisal.

At the close of the War nevertheless the future of Iraq seemed particularly hopeless. England had even less idea here than

elsewhere how she was going to tackle the situation. London was silent or sent contradictory instructions. In 1918 Sir Percy Cox was recalled from Baghdad and sent as Minister to Teheran. His successor was Colonel A.T. Wilson (now Sir Arnold Wilson), an ambitious man and a splendid administrator—almost Prussian in his thoroughness. He and Gertrude Bell, who as Oriental Secretary occupied the second most important post in Baghdad, held opposite views. She was desirous of bringing the Arabs into the administration and of training them for self-government. Wilson wanted to have an irreproachable and efficient administration—an impossibility if he employed Baghdad natives. Gertrude Bell was supported by the—somewhat vague—instructions of the British Government, which desired that England should gradually withdraw from Mesopotamia. She had friends and relations among the most influential people in England, and the letters she sent home perhaps contributed more to mould the Government's policy than Wilson's official dispatches.

In addition to this lack of unity and confidence in the administration there were also difficulties within the country. Kurds and Assyrians troubled the peace in the north, whilst in the south the Shiites unceasingly incited the people against both England and the influential Sunnite families in Baghdad. As Feisal's position in Damascus gradually grew worse, so his intimates and their agents in Iraq began to prepare the way for his arrival. They stirred up rebellion. They supplied money. This Syrian money originally came from England. They furnished arms, and the arms found on rebels in Iraq proved to be modern English rifles. The result was the serious revolt of 1920. This time Wilson's pessimism was justified in the event. He was right and Gertrude Bell wrong. But General Haldane had placed his confidence in her reports and was away holiday-making in the Iranian mountains. The railway was cut in three places. British garrisons were besieged by the rebels.

A complete change came over the scene in the autumn. The rebellion was crushed with the aid of reinforcements. Sir Percy Cox returned to Baghdad as High Commissioner. Feisal was banished from Damascus. Churchill and Lawrence, Cox and Gertrude Bell were unanimous that he should become King of Iraq. A plebiscite held in 1921 resulted in Feisal's victory. All

are agreed that it was 'arranged'. England told the sheikhs what she wanted and the sheikhs told their followers what they were to do. Many Englishmen were extremely critical. They declared that the Arabs in Iraq would sooner return to Turkish rule than become Feisal's subjects; that they did not want to have anything to do with Hussein's family. Hence Feisal had no easy task as a stranger in the land. But he brought with him his trusted friends who had fought at his side, governed with him at Damascus, and learnt, as he had, from misfortune.

After Feisal's assumption of the government there began a decade that outwardly seemed to be filled by a ceaseless struggle between the people of Iraq and the mandatory Power. There were constantly renewed rebellions for the purpose of achieving immediate independence. There were constantly renewed negotiations, draft treaties, refusals, ultimatums, treaties. Underneath this external struggle, however, a sound constructive policy was being pursued. The foundations were laid not only for the new State system but also for the training of an efficient civil service. The English say that the time was too short, that they had not finished their task, and that there are gaps and defects everywhere. That may be true. Nevertheless any one who has been able to listen to an Iraqi Minister speaking of his work, or who has seen the spirit of co-operation in which the common task is carried on with the few English advisers still remaining in Iraq, must agree—more especially if he remembers conditions in many of the neighbouring countries—that here in Iraq a splendid piece of work has been and is being carried on.

King Feisal was actively engaged both in the external struggle and in the work of domestic reconstruction. He acted as intermediary and smoothed over all difficulties. In order to gain adherents in his new country he was obliged to champion the nationalist demands. Nevertheless he knew, and he made it clear to his followers, that they could not hold out without foreign aid either against the Kurds or ibn Saud or the Turks. He had learnt much in Syria about the real balance of power in the world. He and the chief families of Baghdad realized that it was better to delay the achievement of independence for a few years—it had originally been promised for 1928—and in return to obtain the rich district of Mosul and an inexhaustible revenue.

A treaty with England was concluded in 1930. In 1932 Iraq entered the League of Nations. The conditions for the attainment of sovereignty were an offensive and defensive alliance with England; England to be guaranteed the right to transport troops and military supplies across Iraq; the British military airports west of the Euphrates to remain.

All this sounds very grand. In reality the achievement consisted in clearing up and piecing together innumerable unrelated details rather like the clearing up of a country house that has not been lived in for generations. Mesopotamia is large. But it has only three million inhabitants—less than many of the great capitals of the world. The pettiness of affairs in those early years, and the small number of people in charge of them, have been described vividly by Violet Sackville-West in her account of a tea-party at which she and Gertrude Bell were King Feisal's guests:

The King's house lay just outside the town; a wretched building in a sad state of disrepair, the pavingstones of the terrace forced up by weeds, the plaster flaking off the walls and discoloured by large patches of damp. The King himself was a tall, dark, slim, handsome man, looking as though he were the prey to a romantic, an almost Byronic melancholy; he spoke rather bad French, addressing himself in Arabic to Gertrude when his vocabulary failed him. They discussed what linoleum he should have in the kitchen of his new country house. Then tea was brought in, and a sort of pyramid of fanciful cakes, which delighted Feisal, and they discussed at great length the merits of his new cook. Gertrude seemed to be conversant with every detail of his housekeeping as well as with every detail of the government of his kingdom, and to bring as much interest to bear upon the one as upon the other. His melancholy vanished as she twitted and chaffed him, and I watched them both—the Arab prince and the Englishwoman who were trying to build up a new Mesopotamia between them. 'You see,' she had said to me, 'we feel here that we are trying to do something worth while, something creative and constructive;' . . . As we drove back into Baghdad she spoke of his loneliness: 'He likes me to ring up and ask to go to tea,' she said. I could readily believe it.<sup>1</sup>

What a life! From a rigidly orthodox Moslem school in Constantinople to an unfettered Bedouin life in the Hejaz, and from guerrilla warfare waged at the side of the youthful Lawrence

<sup>1</sup> V. Sackville-West: *Passenger to Teheran*, pp. 61-2.

to building up a State in company with a white-haired, blue-eyed Englishwoman! King Feisal was a pessimist, an extraordinarily nervous and sensitive man. Lawrence has told how at times Feisal lay completely exhausted, almost unconscious, in his tent and how he suffered and aged under defeat. Among both Arabs and English he had many enemies. All who were opposed to England's pro-Hussein policy were also opposed to Hussein's son Feisal. Hence it is all the more significant that one of his original opponents—Ernest Main—should say:<sup>1</sup>

'By his charm of manner and his clever diplomacy Feisal within a year or two had put himself into a very strong position and had gained the confidence, goodwill, and support of the masses.'

Feisal only reigned as an independent monarch for a brief period. In 1933 there came the Assyrian massacres. The King tried to reconstruct the Cabinet. According to the Iraq constitution, however, a Government is only compelled to resign if four of its members hand in their resignations. Feisal could only induce three ministers to resign. He was ill. He left for Switzerland to undergo treatment. Many believed that he intended to abdicate. A week later he was dead.

Baghdad was stunned. The situation at the moment was electric. Anything, it was recognized, might happen, the King's death was the one thing no one expected. The position changed at once. Feisal had been the only person able to manipulate the factious leaders and bring the intrigues of Iraqi politics into some kind of satisfactory relationship with Britain. Now he was gone and his heir was his young son of twenty-two. Feisal had been the leader of some of his Ministers since the days when they had served together in the desert with Lawrence. Not surprisingly were they rudderless. It is true to say that Feisal, in the first few months after his death, was more generally popular in Baghdad than he had ever been in his lifetime. His untimely death was a heavy blow to his people and they did not realize his inestimable worth to the country of his adoption until it was too late.<sup>2</sup>

The internal difficulties of the country were really only fully appreciated after Feisal's death and under his successor, the youthful King Ghazi. Iraq is not divided up into as many dif-

<sup>1</sup> Ernest Main: *Iraq*, p. 101.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 102-3.

ferent parts as Syria. But the factions that do exist run the whole gamut of the passions. Iraq was the original battleground of the Shiites and Sunnites. The country round the central reaches of the Euphrates and the towns of Kerbela and Najaf is as intractable to-day as it was in the days of the early Caliphs. After the hated Turkish rule had been abolished the Shiites at last formed the majority in the population; only to realize that the rich families of Baghdad that were accustomed to the task of government were still the most powerful in the land. The priests of Kerbela and Najaf are also rich and powerful. Pilgrims from all parts of the world bring much money. Another source of wealth is the funeral trade, that is to say, the bringing in of the bodies of the faithful who have died in other places and who wished to be buried beside the tombs of Hussein and Ali. England, however, quickly recognized that among the townsfolk there was only one class capable of being associated in the work of administration—namely, the Sunnites of Baghdad, the great families who were already powerful under the Turks and had participated in the government of the country.

Feisal succeeded in bridging over differences. His successor King Ghazi was too young and too little known to enjoy similar authority. Year after year saw fresh disorders and rioting on the middle Euphrates. No year passed without the Passion Play claiming its victims (see page 117). In 1935 the Government felt compelled to forbid the procession and the play. The fury aroused in the Shiite priesthood by this prohibition was not solely due to religious feeling. It was a question of political power. The Shiites demanded a majority in the Cabinet because they formed the majority of the Arab population. The Baghdad Government replied: 'There are not enough Shiites with sufficient training for administration, let alone ministerial office, in a State governed on modern lines. First send your sons to the Government schools. Then they will be given the posts for which they are fitted.' But the priests in Kerbela and Najaf feared lest they should lose their influence if the youth of the country were educated in the advanced State schools. Hence they kept them in the atmosphere of ignorance and piety of the religious schools.

Some of the Bedouin and the tribes that inhabit the country of the middle Euphrates are also Shiites. They are discontented



because they do not exert sufficient influence upon the course of affairs in Baghdad. For them there is also the question of taxation. Under the Ottoman sway taxes were certainly levied. But the tribes never paid voluntarily, and taxes were collected haphazard by means of armed raids. The English officials fixed definite taxes and saw that they were paid. Resentment was great. When the English left the country, the tribesmen no longer saw any reason why taxes should be paid. The Baghdad Government was of a contrary opinion. The difference of opinion found expression in riots and clashes. The tribes were armed and powerful. In 1935, while negotiations were in progress, the two chief sheikhs of the rebel tribes, Shalan Atiyah and Abdul Wahid Sukar, came to Baghdad for the purpose, so they said, of assuring the Government of their peaceful intentions. They arrived with an armed following that passed through the streets of Baghdad in eighty-six motor-cars and lorries and did not create at all a pacific impression.

Since Sidky Bekr, the Kurdish general, undertook the suppression of the tribes in 1936 peace has reigned in the land. An attempt is being made everywhere to make the Bedouin sedentary. The days of nomadic existence are numbered. A motor-car takes twenty-four hours to cross a stretch of desert that a camel caravan requires two to three weeks to cross. The effect has been to make the breeding of camels unprofitable. Moreover, raids on rich convoys of caravans have been senseless since desert police and aeroplanes are there to watch over the safety of travellers.

It is true that the traveller in the desert of Iraq to-day still sees herds of camel rise up black against the horizon and beside them the encampments of nomadic tribes. But a few hundred miles farther on he may come across encampments that, like the others, are composed of black goatskin tents and that yet somehow leave a different impression. The 'difference' consists in the fact that these tents are now never taken down and loaded on the backs of camels. They remain where they are pitched, as permanent dwellings. It is the transition to sedentary life. Sometimes reed huts or even small houses built of clay may be seen among them. Little canals intersect the ground in these districts, and on the edge of the canals—though still lost in the vastness of

the desert—appear the first green shoots of young plantations. The aim of the Government is to ensure that every Arab shall have his own piece of land in the course of time. In return he has only to pay the usual agricultural tax, the tithe, and a contribution to the cost of irrigation.

Some of the sheikhs follow the example of the Government in working energetically for their tribes. Sheikh Adjil of the Shammar is an example. He is ruler over twenty to thirty thousand armed men, and is one of the most impressive personalities in the Arab world to-day. He has had artesian wells sunk and canals constructed. He has given up large portions of his land for purposes of land settlement. In places where ten years ago there was only desert or steppe, there is to-day fertile agricultural land. The complete change-over from one manner of living to another must nevertheless be a lengthy process, and it is easy to understand that many Bedouin prefer their life of untrammelled movement with its accompaniment of hunger, thirst, and cold to laborious agricultural work—a fact that may still from time to time give rise to disorders and breaches of the peace.

The Kurds are the last stronghold of resistance. They had already proclaimed a 'Kingdom of Kurdistan' in 1922 under the rule of their sheikh Mahmud. Thanks to the Treaty of Lausanne it came to an early end. A few years later the Kurds complained because their right to their own tongue and their own officials had been taken from them. In 1930, when the mandate was about to be given up, they had a shock. In common with the Assyrians they had served in the British Army during the suppression of the revolt in Iraq. They were feared and disliked by the rulers of the future independent State. Hence in 1930 to 1931 there came the revolt of the Kurds under Sheikh Mahmud. A further revolt occurred in 1932 under Sheikh Ahmed. The Iraq troops went up into the mountains and were defeated. Only the presence of English aeroplanes saved them from annihilation. The revolt was quelled by English air squadrons.

The attitude of the Kurds to-day is uncertain. The Kurdish mountaineers are not really politicians. Their only desire is to be left in peace. A great many of the civilized Kurds occupy

posts of command in the Iraq army. A Kurd, Sidky Bekr, ruled the country for a year. It may well be that this fact has had a conciliatory effect.

The last serious discord in the State is that between town and country. The progressive Baghdad citizen, doctor, or government official will angrily explain to foreigners that the 'effendi problem' does not exist and that it is a mischievous invention of the English. In the country districts nevertheless, both in the small villages and among the Bedouin, many sharp words are uttered on the subject of the rule of the towns. For this reason the opinion of an experienced Englishman on the subject may be cited here:

An effendi is an educated person; it is assumed that any one who is well dressed must be educated and so entitled to this form of address. . . . In the production of effendis two points are to be noted. First, the educated man thinks it shameful to soil his hands or to engage in menial work. As a result the effendi is unwilling to take up engineering or mechanical work; all the mechanics and artisans in the country are illiterate. There is in Iraq nothing approximating to a literate working class.

The second point to be noted is the continuance of the old idea that the study of Arabic is of itself an education. . . .

A Government appointment is regarded by most Iraqis as the goal of their education. A Government job enhances the dignity of the family, and it can open the avenue to petty graft. . . .

Why does the effendi constitute a major problem for Iraq? The answer is that most of the political and economic problems that will confront the country in the next ten years are problems which the effendi is not qualified to solve. The political and administrative problems might be better left in the hands of men of the Sheikh type and/or Sheikh family, whether 'educated' or not. This type of man comes from a governing stock and is accustomed to dealing with questions of politics or administration. . . . The effendi . . . must give proof that he can stick at a job through discomfort and danger. So far he has had no opportunity to do so. When he has given this proof he may conciliate the tribesmen and minorities with whom he is now so unpopular.<sup>1</sup>

These words appeared in *The Times* during 1933, and are perhaps too strong in some ways. It would nevertheless not have been necessary to quote them if the *coup d'état* in the autumn of

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, October 27th, 1933.

1936, and above all the loyal attitude of the populace in the beginning, had not shown that something was out of joint in the Iraq governmental system.

The proclamation that General Sidky Bekr caused to be dropped from aeroplanes over Baghdad on 29th October 1936, contained the following sentence: 'The Army, composed of your sons, has lost patience with the present Government, concerned only with their personal interests and disregarding the public welfare.'<sup>1</sup>

The Government led by Yasin Hashimi Pasha (who lies buried beside Saladin's tomb in Damascus) which was so suddenly overthrown by Sidky Bekr was the fifth government within three years. The *coup* was certainly aimed less at any particular cabinet than against the administrative system as a whole. After the *coup d'état* an attempt was made in the world Press to discover the background to this violent change of government. International politics were adduced to explain it, and certainly anti-English feelings played their part, as did also the antagonism between pro-Turkish and pan-Arabic feelings among the Iraq populace. The chief cause of the sudden change must nevertheless be sought in domestic politics—in the discontent among the Kurds coupled with Kurdish influence in the Army; resentment in the Army because year after year it was called upon to suppress revolts among the tribes in the south, without ever finally subduing them, owing to the lack of any real policy of conciliation; the feeling that parliamentary government assured to the progressive, but morally somewhat despised, town populations a relatively large influence over the destiny of the country as a whole.

Apart from great personal ambition General Sidky Bekr may also have felt that only an authoritarian government can endure in the East for any length of time. Among the Arabs, who do not attach any importance to systems but only to the personality of a leader, to eloquence and popularity, figures like Hitler, Mussolini, and Atatürk exercise an immense power of attraction. In King Feisal Iraq possessed a representative who stood out from others and was known beyond the frontiers of his own country. A victor of the World War, tried in battle, King Feisal

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, October 31st, 1936.

was a prototype of the great transformation from the medieval to the modern world. For a brief period the nation may have imagined it had found a new leader in Sidky Bekr. But it was not long before he showed that he lacked a quality that is indispensable in Arab eyes—political acumen. Hence his rule remained an episode that ended in murder as it had begun with murder.

It was nevertheless an episode that had salutary effects. Conflicts that had been simmering for years came to the surface and were dealt with. The self-complacency of the ruling city families was shattered. To-day it is clear that a government that does not wish to meet with the same fate within a short space of time must prove its worth. A number of forts were built by Sidky Bekr's order in the rebel districts, little armoured gunboats sail up and down the Euphrates, and the Iraq air force is becoming stronger and more efficient from year to year. Apart from the maintenance of order by force, conditions within the country are steadily improving, and the work of reconstruction is being systematically carried out. Things that have been promised time and again for years past have actually been put in hand by the new Midfai Government. The finances of a State like Iraq that can count upon steady revenues from its oil-fields present fewer difficulties than those in other countries. The new Five Years Plan provides for the building of a vast network of roads, and irrigation experts from Egypt are travelling through the country as advisers. The barrage at Kut that is intended to make the extensive district of Gharaaf fertile is nearing completion, and the surplus water from the spring floods on the Euphrates can be conducted into Lake Habbanieh. A stretch of desert to the north-west of Baghdad has been made available for cultivation by the construction of the Abu Ghuraib Canal.

Most important of all is the welding together of the different elements in the population. Here the Army has been of great value. In 1934 Parliament passed a two years' compulsory service bill, and in 1936 a royal proclamation gave it the force of law. For a long time it seemed impossible to put it into practice. The Shiites did not wish to deliver over their sons to alien influence. The tribes had their own military organization that had hitherto preserved their independence. The townsfolk did

not want their sons to be exposed to the hardships of army life. The fact that conscription is in force to-day, and that companies of well-trained soldiers march through the streets on their way to manœuvres in the desert, witnesses to the Government's power of organization and to the consolidation of the authority of the State. Once a few generations have done their training together—Sunnites with Shiites, nomads with townsfolk and Kurds—then it is possible that a State which already stands on such firm foundations internationally and economically may also achieve the necessary internal equilibrium. It will then no longer be possible for the festival of Hussein's death at Kerbela and the Moharram pilgrimage to Kazimain to be occasions of rioting, civil disorder, and bloodshed. The fact that the people of Iraq, despite their ancient and deep-seated prejudices born of religious dissensions and racial enmities, are consciously working for the attainment of this inner equilibrium, whilst in other Arab lands the differences are becoming greater and deeper, is both their greatest constructive achievement and a proof that they rightly occupy a leading position in the Arab world as a truly politically minded people.

Up to the end of 1937 Hinaidi, a small military and residential suburb of Baghdad, was not regarded with favour by the Iraqis. For at Hinaidi lay the British air fleet that in accordance with the treaty has been stationed upon Iraqi soil since the declaration of Iraq's independence. Since December, 1937, however, the people of Baghdad have looked upon these same hangars with eyes of love, because now they are occupied by Iraq military aircraft instead of English. The English have withdrawn into the desert. They have established a large and convenient air force camp to hold five thousand men and their officers at Dhibban, some sixty miles outside Baghdad, near Lake Habbanieh. Here they are invisible; for except when the Euphrates overflows its banks and makes the ordinary desert tracks impassable, no regular road runs near the air-port. Here they can drill in peace and quiet. White lines have been marked upon the desert sands; wooden boards bearing English notices stand as monitors in the solitude; the air is permanently filled with the roar of engines. True, the Tommies miss the joys of

Baghdad night-life at Dhibban; but on the other hand English statesmen have the comfortable certainty that the presence of a British air force is no longer felt as an annoyance—or indeed as a veiled threat—by the Iraqis. The good will of the Iraqis is very important to the English; just as important as the control from the air of the direct route that leads from the Mediterranean to India by way of Baghdad and Basra.

Baghdad is the traffic centre of this air route. Twenty-eight passenger planes land there regularly every week, either on the landing ground at the aerodrome or on Lake Habbanieh. Mails are dispatched to Europe daily and to India six days in the week. Six different air lines maintain services to Baghdad:

1. The British Imperial Airways, with ten services weekly, of which eight are by hydroplane and two by aeroplane.

2. The Dutch K.L.M. (Royal Dutch Air Line), with six services weekly.

3. The French line, Air France, that maintains aerial communication between Iraq and Syria (Beirut-Baghdad) and, like Imperial Airways and K.L.M., unites Europe with eastern Asia.

4. The German Lufthansa, over the recently opened route Berlin-Baghdad-Teheran-Kabul, by a weekly service that is so popular that travellers in Teheran must book their places weeks in advance.

5. The recently opened Iran Air Service that connects Baghdad with Teheran and takes the German mails from the Lufthansa over this stretch.

6. The Egyptian Misr Air Line that connects Baghdad with Palestine, Cyprus, and Egypt, and, like Imperial Airways, maintains cross-connections with South Africa and the Sudan.

In the winter of 1938 another service was to be added to these six by the Italian Ala Littoria for the purpose of establishing communication with the Italian empire.

Baghdad flourishes again as in Haroun al Rashid's day. There is no better way of learning conditions and opinions in Iraq than by visiting this city. The first impression is disappointing. The new-comer is weary after thirty hours of travel across

the desert, and tired of the blazing sunshine and the dazzling, flat, yellow-grey dusty plain. He sees a green line on the horizon—the palm-groves of Baghdad. Where are the cupolas? There are no cupolas. Away to the extreme left, in the far distance, something golden glitters. But this is not Baghdad, the visitor is told—it is the holy city of Kazimain.

On closer inspection Baghdad's palm-groves prove to be no longer green, but dusty and somehow desolate-looking. They rise up in the midst of dust-coloured clay walls. The Tigris is yellow—almost as yellow as the desert and the walls of the houses. Baghdad seems to consist of a single street several miles long. The one- and two-storied houses on this street are dusty-yellow like the desert. The bricks are in fact only pieces of dried and baked desert. The street is filled with the noise of motor-horns and the raucous sound of Arab melodies played upon ancient gramophones. And heat. The asphalt softens beneath the rays of the sun, and one's heels stick in it as they do in a wet, clayey country road. The surface of the street is marked by the treads of motor-tyres and by horses' hooves. That is Baghdad at first sight—hot, dusty, dreary, immensely flat.

Then very slowly the magic of the city begins to work. After the glaring hot days the evenings are like a sudden transition into a dream world—evenings spent beside the Tigris in gardens that lie between the houses on the long street and the river. It is as if the oppressiveness of the daytime dissolved into an ethereal feeling of well-being. The western sky is a transparently clear, delicate golden-green. Against it are seen the dark outlines of the palms and the houses on the opposite bank of the river. A last shimmer of golden light from the setting sun rests upon the water. Rising up from the river and the dark, carpeted grass of the gardens comes the first cool breath of evening. The noise of the city dies away. Instead the rumbling of wagons crossing the pontoon bridge becomes audible—a half-rhythmic, half-irregular jolting over wood and uneven iron couplings. And then the gurgling of the swirling waters of the swiftly running river. Lights are reflected in the water. The sky grows darker than it does anywhere else on a summer's night, and full of stars.

It is the contrasts above all that constitute the charm of Baghdad. The gentle twilight peace and relaxation in the gar-



den as compared with the garden in the afternoon beneath the appalling heat of the western sun, completely deserted with its deck-chairs and arm-chairs and awning-covered swing-chairs, its few tall trees and bushes. In the afternoon it is inconceivable that any human being should feel well and happy here. That is one of the contrasts. Then there is the light delicate blue-green of the cupolas of the mosque rising above the dusty greyish-yellow sea of houses. For there really are cupolas in Baghdad. At first the only one that is to be seen is in the long street running north and south that bears the name of Caliph Rashid. After a time, however, and after wandering through the side-streets and the souks, the number of cupolas increases. But they all resemble the first—a soft curve composed of tiles dyed a very delicate blue and green. The green is not the green of the palms, any more than the blue is the blue of the sea or of the sky. They are the tender colours, gentle and soothing, that are lacking to the desert landscape. The more often the cupolas are seen the more beautiful they appear. They do not make an instantaneous impression like the domes of Rome or Stamboul. They steal their way gradually into the affections. They are not dramatic. They lie concealed between and above yellow walls and do not rise up above vast squares. They have to be discovered.

Another contrast—though this is one that extends beyond the confines of Baghdad—is that between the inhabitants of the Syrian towns and those of Baghdad. They all call themselves Arabs. But the contrasts are enormous, even in external appearance. In Beirut and Tripoli, even in Damascus, it takes years of practice to distinguish a Syrian dressed in European clothes from a Frenchman. They are all medium-sized, vivacious people, Mediterranean in type, the product of the mingling of many races. In Baghdad, on the other hand, are to be seen the darker, brown-skinned Iraqi and among them many tall, thin young fellows, many clean-cut, sharp profiles. The contrast in atmosphere is even more remarkable. Suspicion lurks in all Syrian eyes, hatred and the lust for revenge blazes from many, even though concealed beneath a mask of indifference. In Baghdad the people are happy—quite simply and naturally happy.

The visitor to Baghdad has the feeling that something is happening, that a city and its inhabitants are waking up, and

that the people are engaged on reconstructing their civilization after centuries of somnolence. And what is happening here in Baghdad is not happening because a European colonial Power builds good roads for the comfort of its servants and in order to render easier the subjugation of the country, or because Europeans want to exploit untapped wealth. It is not happening because an enlightened ruler wishes during his own lifetime to see a backward people transformed into a modern nation. It is not happening therefore under pressure from above, nor in exaggerated feverish haste, but quite quietly and as a result of the people's own initiative.

Iraq is perhaps the only country in the Near East visited by Europeans where no inferiority complex disturbs the surface of life. The citizen of Iraq, be he Bedouin or townsman, official or private individual, meets the European in a perfectly natural manner and never seeks to appear as if he were other than he is. He is rightly sufficient unto himself. He is neither servile nor chauvinistic. Perhaps the English are partly responsible because from the outset they have never treated Iraq as a colony. The English have the faculty of behaving like comrades on equal terms even when they are actually rulers. Moreover, the people of Iraq, unlike the Egyptians, Turks, and Persians, did not have their pride wounded through centuries by the régime of capitulations. True, capitulations existed in Mesopotamia. But they existed merely as part of the Ottoman empire, as part of a foreign domination. It was a matter of indifference to the citizen of Baghdad or Kut or Basra whether or not humiliating distinctions were made between his masters, the Turks, and the isolated individuals from Europe who occasionally made their appearance.

Although he has not progressed as far along the path of 'civilization' as his neighbours in the north, east, and west, the man of Iraq appears to be advancing with a very steady, because not too hasty, step. There are of course young people who feverishly desire progress without any consideration for the countryfolk that cannot keep pace with them. They want everything to be new, modern, and European. Everything that is old should be pulled down. Besides these youths, however, are the steadier older men, who spend their afternoons in discussions

that last for hours or in silent meditation over a hookah in a café. The cafés are for the most part single-storied houses. They are always packed tight in the mornings and afternoons. The habitué does not visit one or another café according to his fancy. He has a season ticket at his chosen café that gives him the right to remain there all day or to return as often as he chooses between the brief periods that he devotes to business outside the café. His contemplative habits moderate to some extent the haste and impetuosity of his juniors. And so the balance is kept fairly even between reaction and the thirst for novelty.

The appearance of the crowded street is also a mixture—a contrast, if one likes to call it so, between old and new. The important feature of it is that each individual behaves exactly as he pleases. There are to be seen young men in European clothes wearing the *sidara*—the tall black doubly indented cap that King Feisal introduced as the national headgear. Others wear straw or felt hats. Among these people in European clothes are tall men dressed in shirt-like garments over which they wear thin gold-embroidered cloaks, and on their heads the white or red checked head-cloth that is kept in place by two thick black cords. The veil is worn by nearly all women—black, flitting, figures in the glaring light. The girls on their way to school, the first typists and teachers, still carry their curly bobbed heads with a slightly defiant air.

Everything is to be found in Rashid Street—shops, agencies, hotels, cinemas, administrative offices and again shops. Two-horse carriages drive to and fro amid shining American motor-cars, and between them run the little swift, aluminium-coloured motor-buses that are known as ‘bird-cages’ because of the wooden lattices on either side. Pedestrians remain beneath the arcades where a little shade is to be found even at noon—shade in which the temperature is between a hundred and a hundred and twenty degrees. But all this is changing. A few years ago pedestrians sank up to their ankles in mud during the rainy season, and bull’s-eye lanterns afforded the only illumination by night. Nowadays there are asphalt and electric lighting. Next year two great iron bridges will replace the pontoon bridge and the ‘bird-cages’ will give place to large modern buses. On the outer edges of the city appear new streets, legations, gar-

dens, clubs. Rows of streets are being cut through the crowded old town that are to be filled with new shops, offices, agencies, and cinemas. It will then no longer be possible simply to go to Rashid Street to seek an acquaintance. Then there will be less and less of the quiet, narrow old streets with latticed balconies, high, flat clay walls with few windows and unexpected openings on to the river. The quarters in which as in olden days Shiites, Sunnites, Chaldeans, Assyrians, and Jews each live separately will merge into one another. A piece of the ancient East will be lost for ever. Nevertheless much will remain the same. People will continue to sleep out on the flat roofs when the heat in the rooms is no longer to be borne—to sleep beneath the dark sky or the white southern moonlight, broken at intervals by the barking of dogs, the cries of watchmen, and sometimes by the distant howling of jackals in the desert.

One thing of all others remains in the memory—a curious sound that is in a way rhythmical, and yet unrhythmical. It is the rumbling of the carts over the pontoons of the Maude Bridge. Sometimes a solitary staccato, another time an almost contrapuntal design of many wagons simultaneously, and again a long unbroken rumbling. This noise is not heard anywhere else in the world. Many foreigners will regret its disappearance when the old wooden Maude Bridge is replaced by a modern example of engineering skill in iron.

Baghdad is made up of all these different things—the boats floating with the stream, the humour of the tall traffic policemen, the spreading, flat, monotonous, yellow city, the terrible burning sun in the dry air, the gay street life, the unexpected glimpse of a blue-green dome from the terrace in the court of a private house, the soothing mildness of the evenings, the black silhouettes of veiled women sitting by the water's edge, the long-drawn-out melancholy of an Arab song. And most important of all perhaps, and that which gives the city its mysterious charm—the good humour of its people.

## VII

### THE NEAR EAST IN WORLD POLITICS

*'The East is a University in which the scholar never takes his degree.'*

[SIR RONALD STORRS]

THE above quotation comes from the pen of a man who has spent years in the Near East as an English Governor. The sentiment is far humbler than that of the quotation from Kipling that comes at the head of Chapter III. It is typical of the change that has come over the relations between East and West during the past fifty years—a change that is still in full tide and the real trend of which cannot yet be determined. For since the entity 'the East' has been broken up the many individual parts are seeking to adjust themselves anew; they clash with one another, they set up barriers against each other, and at the same time they endeavour to gather themselves together in new religious or material movements. They are antagonistic to each other and yet they are trying to form united fronts against the threat from without. All these different currents run parallel with each other, against each other, and through each other. To them is due the utter impossibility of ever making any definite pronouncement about political conditions in the East that causes studies carried on in the University of the East never to reach a conclusion.

Each fact that has been recognized as true already contains within itself its contradiction. Any one who seeks a single truth will certainly find a complete picture—but not an accurate one. Any one who endeavours to marshal all the different truths in an orderly fashion will grow distracted. He will discover that Pan-Arabism is a Utopia and that Pan-Arabism is one of the most powerful political factors in the Near East. He may make the acquaintance of a native doctor in Iraq whose modernist

zeal causes him to fight against 'reactionary' Islam, while at the same time he regards Islam as a valuable weapon in the struggle against the imperialist States. He may witness the ratification of a treaty of friendship between Iraq and Iran and on the same day hear an Iranian politician demanding the 'return' of Mesopotamia to the Iranian empire. He will learn that Sidky Bekr's *coup d'état* was instigated by England in order to weaken the Pan-Arabic movement in Iraq. He will also learn that Sidky Bekr's *coup d'état* was a Turkish move to eliminate British influence in Iraq. Notwithstanding these contradictions it is to a certain degree possible to set forth the more important tendencies in the foreign politics of the Near East, even if it must be left to the future and the contradictions inherent in it to fill in the details of the picture.

The first State to develop an independent policy is also that whose aim is the clearest and whose actions are the most comprehensible—Turkey. It was a great piece of good fortune for the Turks that in the 'twenties of this century Europe was so exhausted and so occupied with its own affairs that they and their half Balkan, half Asiatic, State were left to their own devices. The Western Powers did not believe that the successor to the 'Sick Man' on the Bosphorus would be able to cure himself, and still less did they believe in the permanence of Mustafa Kemal's rule. The Central Powers were still too weak to take part in international affairs. It is true that during the period of inflation many Germans and Austrians came to Turkey as employees and expert advisers. But they did not interfere in politics. The influence that Germany exerts to-day in Turkey is due not least to this fact. The European constellation demanded a widening and deepening of the first friendship that had enabled the youthful State to oppose the victor Powers—the friendship with Soviet Russia. This friendship did not prevent, any more than did the Italo-Soviet friendship, all Communist tendencies within the country being suppressed. In the economic sphere it is impossible not to recognize certain similarities between Turkey and Soviet Russia. These originated less in ideological sources than in the fact that as a consequence of a lack of private enterprises economic development in Turkey had to be directed by the State itself.

The feeling of security arising out of Turkey's friendship with Moscow proved useful in her discussions with neighbouring countries. With some of these disputes we are already familiar. They concerned not only Turkey's Asiatic neighbours but also one or other European Great Power. With Syria it was a frontier question, and this was solved in stages—war with France in 1919 to 1921; the Franklin-Bouillon Treaty (1921); the de Jouvenal Treaty (1926); the establishment of the Republic of Hatay (1938). With Iraq the dispute was over Mosul. After this question had been settled to England's satisfaction the frontier still remained disturbed, and behind each Kurdish revolt Iraq suspected Turkish propaganda. It was not until the 'thirties that the frontier became peaceful. With Iran a peace treaty was concluded in 1926. Nevertheless there was considerable friction in 1927 as a result of frontier fighting with the Kurds, in the course of which several Turkish officers were carried off to Iran. Diplomatic relations were broken off. The frontier around Ararat and between Urmia and Lake Van continued to be disturbed until after lengthy negotiations in 1930 a pact was signed by the two States. It formed the basis of a growing friendship.

As long as Turkey was weak, the Dardanelles demilitarized, the peace settlement of Versailles unassailed, Turkey's role in world politics was a minor one. But since Europe has roused itself from the stupor that engulfed it after the World War, and since the more active foreign policies of certain States with the consequent reaction of other States has produced a condition of tension that seems to be transferring the post-War world back into its pre-War case, Turkey has once more taken her accustomed place on the international chessboard. Italy led the way in the destruction of the *status quo* system. The Balkan League was formed against real or imagined Italian ambitions—a league which brought Turkey back to Europe, and within the framework of a system of pacts under French influence. The Abyssinian War transformed this relationship. England took France's place—though still working hand in hand with France. This was no easy step for either to take. For the resentment of the Turks against British post-War policy has been great.

England, however, considers the safeguarding of the Eastern Mediterranean as a matter of the utmost importance. Thus, in conjunction with the sanctions applied to Italy, the Mediterranean Pact of Mutual Assistance was concluded during the winter of 1935 to 1936. It contains promises to Turkey, the nature of which remain a secret. Nevertheless the Conference of Montreux at which the Turks were given back unrestricted control of the Dardanelles may be regarded as a result of this Mediterranean Pact.

Ever since the Dardanelles have been fortified by Turkey, Turkey's position has become definitely stronger. But her relations with Soviet Russia have deteriorated somewhat, or at all events they had until the death of Kemal Ataturk. Moscow was chagrined at being no longer the sole intimate friend; the increased independence of Turkey aroused uneasiness in Russia, while on the other hand Angora grew more and more disgusted at Stalin's ruthless domestic policy. Among the European Powers close competition has begun for Turkey's favours. This was especially evident in 1938 when the Greeks enlarged the scope of their pact of friendship with Turkey—a testimony to the fact that the Balkan Entente has been subject to internal friction. Next England gave Turkey a loan of sixteen millions sterling that is to be used chiefly for rearmament. There is no longer any talk of pledging Turkish revenues and natural resources as security for the loan—a fact that speaks volumes for the internal strength and external importance of the young State. In June, England was followed by France with a pact of friendship and the gift of the Hatay. And last of all there came the visit to Angora in October of Dr. Funk, the German Minister for National Economy, which brought new strength to an old friendship in the form of a German trade credit of one hundred and fifty million Marks.

Although less perceptibly, the political evolution of the other Near Eastern States resembles that of Turkey. The transition from a period of frontier disputes to participation in international affairs is being completed very gradually. Even to-day there does not seem to be any definitely fixed frontier between Iraq and Transjordan—perhaps because England has learnt to do without imaginary straight lines drawn across the desert. A



quarrel between Iraq and Syria arose over a part of Gesireh. At first Deir-ez-Zor was considered to be Iraqi, later it became Syrian. The frontier issues between Iraq and Saudi Arabia have already been discussed. The endeavours on the part of England to achieve a compromise ultimately led to a meeting in 1930 between King Feisal and King ibn Saud on board an English warship in the Persian Gulf. Although this meeting did not suffice to clear up all causes of friction, it nevertheless laid the foundation of a compromise that was later to give place to friendship.

The relations between Iraq and Iran constitute the thorniest of Near Eastern problems. For centuries the two formed an entity, now under Arab, now under Persian rule. Even when Mesopotamia became Turkish the great Shiite community continued to exercise its influence despite frontier barriers. The Mujtehids in Kerbela and Najaf are mostly Persian. Just as before the War they made their influence felt in Teheran, so they tried to make it felt in Baghdad after the War. When England sought to prevent them from achieving their aim, they fought against England. After England had taken their leader on an enforced pilgrimage to Mecca by way of Aden, nine Mujtahids left their country in protest and went to Iran. The result was that the many profitable Persian pilgrims who formerly came to Kerbela and Najaf ceased to appear. In consequence of the stoppage of the pilgrim traffic an agreement was reached with England and the nine dignitaries returned to their homes. Meanwhile an outburst of Arab nationalism was manifesting itself in Iraq. Baghdad was angry because Persia refused to recognize the new State, and this anger was vented upon the Persians in Iraq. Therefore Persia for a second time forbade pilgrimages to Iraq. In addition the Kurdish question between Iraq and Iran led to frontier incidents. Telegraphic communication between the two countries was cut off. Any one who wanted to telegraph from Qasr-Shirin to Khanikin or from Basra to Mohammerah—all towns situated less than twenty-five miles away from each other—was obliged to send the telegram by way of India.

In 1929 the Teheran Government did recognize Iraq. But the most difficult problem still awaited solution—the question of the

Shatt-el-Arab. The Shatt-el-Arab is a broad stream in which are united the waters of the Euphrates, Tigris, and Karun, before they all run in a single course to the Persian Gulf. To right and left of this wide, clayey yellow river is flat alluvial land on which are extensive palm groves and which is intersected by little canals containing deposits of salt. The ownership of this watercourse and of the harbours that have grown up on either side has been contested from the earliest days. In 1914, after years of negotiation, a frontier treaty was finally concluded between Iran and Turkey that gave Turkey the whole course and fixed the frontier at the low water level on the Persian bank. After the War Iraq, as the legal successor to Turkey, claimed sovereignty over the river course. Iran replied that the treaty of 1914 had never come into force.

Iraq has no harbour on the Persian Gulf itself, and therefore can only gain access to the sea by way of Basra and the Shatt-el-Arab. For this reason Iraq necessarily sets great store by the ownership of this waterway. Iran, on the other hand, possesses a number of ports on the Persian Gulf. Nevertheless the fact that both Abadan and Ahwaz are only attainable by going up the Karun through Iraq territorial waters is regarded by Teheran as intolerable. England is also deeply concerned in this question because Abadan and Ahwaz are the most important towns within the sphere of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. Abadan serves as an oil reservoir for the British Fleet. In 1929 the Iranian Finance Minister visited Abadan and demanded the removal of the Iraq customs house from Iranian soil. The customs house was transferred to a customs ship anchored offshore. Ever since then the Shatt-el-Arab question has been disturbing tempers on both sides of the water.

The Abyssinian crisis caused the beginning of a period of great political activity on the part of the Arab countries. From this fact alone it is safe to argue that the majority of the treaties signed during this period were concluded under English auspices. In the spring of 1936 negotiations began between Saudi Arabia and Egypt over an incident that occurred in connection with Egyptian pilgrims to Mecca in 1926 and that resulted in the severance of diplomatic relations. In November 1936 the two

States concluded a new treaty of friendship. In April 1936 Saudi Arabia and Iraq concluded a treaty of Moslem friendship and Arab brotherhood, that is to say an alliance. Negotiations were contemplated over such questions as the abolition of customs duties, the improvement of the road used by pilgrims to Mecca, frontier and pasturage rights, a common currency. These negotiations did in fact take place and resulted in a new agreement in May 1938. In 1936 Iraq and Yemen conducted negotiations on Saudi Arabian soil. The conclusion of a treaty was announced, but nothing has so far become known of its terms. In February 1938 the Press published reports of a treaty negotiated between ibn Saud and Transjordan. No important agreement, however, is likely to have been concluded while the Maan-Akaba question continues to await solution. In 1937 a treaty for the promotion of neighbourly relations was concluded between Iraq and Syria.

In addition to these domestic agreements between Arab States that were concluded at England's instigation, there has also been an attempt to bring the Near Eastern States into some form of general confederation. Opinions vary as to whether this attempt has been more strongly promoted by Turkey or by Great Britain. At all events Turkey spares no pains to bring about a union between Iraq and Iran, because it is the essential preliminary for the contemplated Four Power Pact. In 1937 a compromise was reached between Teheran and Baghdad. Iraq abandoned sovereign rights over three districts, but its sovereign right to the Shatt-el-Arab was confirmed. A commission composed of representatives of both States is to regulate all questions concerning the river and its traffic. Although this treaty was ratified in the spring of 1938 by both States, agreement has not yet been reached over the commission itself. The knottiest part of the problem still awaits solution.

The Iraq-Iran treaty of friendship of June 1937 nevertheless sufficed to make possible the conclusion of the Four Power Pact that had been aimed at ever since October 1935. At the end of June 1937 Rushdu Aras, then Turkish Foreign Minister, went to Teheran by way of Baghdad, and on July 9th a pact of non-aggression was signed in the little mountain castle of Saadabad by the Foreign Ministers of Iran, Turkey, Iraq, and Afghan-

istan. It is tacitly accepted that in these negotiations Iraq acted as a sort of representative of all the Arab countries, and especially of Saudi Arabia, whilst the entry of Syria into the pact is expected after it has attained its independence.

In all the signatory States it was fairly openly admitted, although not by the responsible ministers, that the Near Eastern Four Power Pact 'has no more significance than the Balkan Pact or the Little Entente'. The reason for this weakness is to be found in causes similar to those operative in south-eastern Europe. The gulf between dissatisfied States and those who desire the continuance of the *status quo* exists in Asia Minor as in the rest of the world, though it has not yet resulted in the same organization of opposing fronts as in Europe. The youthful patriots of Iran want an extension of their State to correspond with that existing in the eighteenth century; that is to say, in the east the inclusion of a large portion of Afghanistan, in the north the Caucasus as far as Derbent, and in the west at least, a part of Mesopotamia. Hitherto Turkey has held rigidly to the restrictions she placed on herself during the years immediately following the World War. She only claims Turkish soil. In a part of the world where ethnographical frontiers are so intermingled that is, however, an elastic claim. It may no doubt be taken for granted that her original demand for the incorporation of Aleppo in Turkey has not been abandoned, but only postponed. That Mosul is also coveted by Turkey is understandable. As a matter of fact the Kurds are no more Turkish than they are Iraqi, even though they may temporarily prefer to belong to Iraq.

Syria and Iraq are on the defensive as against these two States. Syria has already suffered the first territorial loss in the Hatay. Despite its friendship with Turkey, Iraq took the part of Syria during the quarrel over the Sanjak, at least in the assertion that the majority of the population of the Sanjak was Arabic. This testifies to a feeling of solidarity that is probably to be attributed less to the common Arab blood of the population of the two States than to the fear that has never been publicly admitted of the expansionist designs of a neighbour who until twenty years ago ruled over virtually the whole of Western Asia. While Syria lives in disharmony with its mandatory Power, and has

too few of its own troops to go to war, Iraq has grown stronger internally. It should have no difficulty in defending its territory if England affords it diplomatic, and if necessary military, support. In this review of the States the answer to the question whether Saudi Arabia tends more to the side of the expansionist or of the *status quo* States is, like most other things in ibn Saud's kingdom, veiled in silence and mystery. 'He is a man of few words but of quick decision', his followers say of him.

Self-confidence and the feeling of their own importance have been aroused among Oriental peoples by increased tension in international affairs and the enhanced interest of the European Powers in the Near East. The independence of Egypt is a fresh milestone on the road leading to the complete emancipation of the East. The event had the effect of rousing the Syrians, and the Syrian revolt resulted in the Franco-Syrian Treaty. The success of Syria's struggle for freedom, coupled with the increase of Jewish immigration that resulted from the anti-Semitic legislation of the Third Reich, lent additional strength to the revolution in Palestine. From being an isolated problem Palestine became in the course of two years the centre of all disputes in the Near East. All the neighbouring States felt themselves to be involved or sought to involve themselves. All political discussions came round to Palestine sooner or later: for the moment the attitude adopted in this question became a means of judging character and a sort of touchstone for good and evil.

Thanks to the Palestine question, ideas gained power and political reality that had hitherto only been put forward by idealists and intellectuals as means and aims of policy. Pan-Islamism and Pan-Arabism, from being catchwords and Yellow Press bogies, became political factors. The two intermingle and are at once identical and contradictory in many points. Pan-Islamism is the older of the two slogans, especially the idea of the Caliphate, with which Germany sought to make propaganda during the War. In those days it was discovered—and the discovery startled the English perhaps even more than the Germans—that the idea of a Holy War and a Caliphate had only a very small political influence. The whole Shi'ite world

remained indifferent to it because it has never admitted the Caliph's authority. Nevertheless, despite its limited power of attraction, the notion of a Caliphate has been continually revived during the post-War years. England continues to fear its power. After Ataturk had thrown it aside, England made no objection when her protégé King Hussein of Mecca assumed the dignity of Caliph. The power of the Caliphate and of Islam now revealed itself in a negative fashion. The whole Moslem world, whose pilgrims were accustomed to be plundered by Hussein's followers, raised a protest. On this wave of protest ibn Saud was carried to the throne of the Hejaz. The Wahabite leader is nevertheless more energetically rejected as Caliph by the Shiites than any Sunnite Caliph would be.

Did ibn Saud play with the idea of making himself Caliph? Certain remarks of Philby's seem to indicate that he did so. The meeting of a Pan-Islamic Congress in 1926, however, showed that the differences are irreconcilable. It was the first and the last Islamic congress to be held on Saudi Arabian soil.

Ibn Saud is neither the sole nor the last pretender to the Caliphate. For a long time past Egypt has raised pretensions to be the religious centre of Islam and the cultural centre of the Arab world. The great Arabic newspapers *El Ahram* and *Mokat-tam* that are read from Fez to Baghdad are published in Cairo. Cairo is the home of the theological Al-Azhar University, the students of which come from all parts of the world. King Fuad (who died in 1936) would have liked to have assumed the Caliphate, and he looked upon the opposition raised by the Arab world to this notion as an act of definite hostility. In January 1938, on the occasion of the marriage of the young King Farouk of Egypt, Sheikh el Mahrab in the course of a sermon in the Al-Azhar mosque said: 'Moslems throughout the world look upon our ruler as their leader and as the head of Islam.' The crowd replied to these words with shouts of 'Long live King Farouk! Long live the Caliph!' Although this incident passed unnoticed in Europe, it created a sensation in the Moslem world.

On the Asiatic bank of the Suez Canal it is said that the Mufti of Jerusalem, Hadji Mahomet Emin el Husseini, has designs on the Caliphate. He belongs to one of the two most

powerful families in Jerusalem and, though still a young man, he has had a very varied career. He has been an officer in the Ottoman Army; he fought with Feisal in Damascus; was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment by the English for inflammatory speeches during the troubles in 1920; fled to Transjordan; was pardoned; and returned to Jerusalem in 1921 as Mufti in succession to his brother. He was elected to the presidency of the Supreme Islamic Council in Palestine. In this capacity he has control of the Wakf administration, i.e. control of all Moslem money for religious, public, and in part private, charitable purposes. The Shariah—the administration of Islamic, or religious justice—is under his direction. In 1931 he presided over an Islamic Congress in Jerusalem at which a hundred and forty-five delegates from all the Islamic countries were present. His ability and his personal charm make friends for him everywhere. His influence is increasing. At the time of his flight from Jerusalem he was not only head of a great religious organization but also the real leader of the Arab Party in Palestine, which was officially organized by his nephew Jemal Bey el Husseini. The English hoped to break his power by taking the control of the Wakf revenues from him. They were disappointed in their hopes. Money from every Arab country pours into the villa in Lebanon where the Mufti has taken up residence since the autumn of 1937. His spiritual influence has only been increased by his voluntary exile, because in his present abode he is free from all the domestic party strife of Palestine.

In the person of the Mufti the religious merges into the nationalist movement. He unites the ideals of Pan-Islamism and Pan-Arabism in his own person. Pan-Arabism has changed greatly during the thirty years of its existence. Originally it was a movement for the liberation of the Arab peoples in the Ottoman Empire. It was born in Syria and was supported by France in pre-War days. In the first fifteen years after the War it was less a movement for a great Arab empire than a movement against the two mandatory Powers, France and England. In Syria it is also an expression of despair and a means of escape from the tense, hate-filled everyday world. In those days, in the case of Feisal and also ibn Saud, the Pan-Arabic idea was chiefly a cloak behind which they might conceal their personal

aspiration for Arab hegemony. In the 'twenties the movement was taken seriously by very few people. Perhaps it can best be compared with pre-War Pan-Slavism. Pan-Slavism was a battle-cry for the liberation of the Christian Slav peoples of the Ottoman Empire. The Balkan Wars and the bitter disputes of the War and post-War periods have shown how small was the likelihood of a real union between the liberated Slav races. It is equally unthinkable that the Europeanized, business-like Syrian intellectuals will ever voluntarily submit to the patriarchal government of ibn Saud.

The Pan-Arabic movement nevertheless took on a different aspect as the Palestine problem became more acute. Out of tiny groups whose influence was negligible there grew up in all the chief Arab towns organizations to which former cabinet ministers belong and which are capable of making their influence felt in the formulation of governmental policy. The Congress at Bludan in the autumn of 1937 was the first attempt to gather together the entire forces of the movement and to present them to the world as a single unity. The Congress was a failure. The extremists gained the upper hand and some of the boycotting measures which they demanded against England merely sounded ridiculous. Nevertheless the movement has become increasingly active since this Congress met. The struggle in Palestine brings in many young recruits and in a number of States the Pan-Arab Committee is in intimate association with the army.

Islam as a community comprises some two hundred and fifty million people, half of whom live within the confines of the British Empire. For that reason the young members of the Pan-Arab movement regard the Pan-Islam movement as useful despite the fact that their whole outlook on life is anti-religious. For the Arabs in the Succession States of the Ottoman Empire this is an entirely novel attitude that among other results leads to co-operation with Egypt. For prior to the War the two movements worked against each other. The Arabs in the Ottoman Empire were, on account of their opposition to the Caliph, also opponents of Islam, whilst the Egyptians fought for Islam against the supremacy of the Christian English. The two streams now flow in one. 'Islam is not our goal, but the light that illumines



the path to our goal,' explained a Pan-Arab in Iraq. And he admitted quite openly that, without arousing religious fanaticism, it would not have been possible permanently to keep alive the fighting spirit in the Palestinian Arabs. As long as the struggle continues in Palestine, the difference in principle between the two movements will be perceptible only to a very few of their members; the vast majority only see their common enemy. If victory once attends their arms, it will be interesting to see how the differences could be bridged over. What would the Mufti of Jerusalem say if one day his Pan-Arab followers should demand the substitution of a European hat for the *keffieh* and that women should abandon the veil?

'There is no Arab nation,' Gertrude Bell wrote in the days when she was still an impartial observer and had not begun to mix herself up in Arab politics. As a matter of fact the question: 'What is Pan-Arabia?' is not easy to answer. There are between thirty and forty million Arabic-speaking people. But only about thirteen millions are racially Arabic. The remainder are Berbers, Egyptians, negroes. Obviously it is impossible to make clear-cut distinctions, since many Berbers and Egyptians have been Arabicized. Yet notwithstanding racial differences the fanatics of the Pan-Arab movement want to found an empire that shall stretch from the Turkish and Iranian frontier to Morocco. At present the movement has a foothold in all Arab countries from Asia Minor to the Atlantic coast of North Africa. The unity of the movement depends nevertheless not upon the Pan-Arab ideal but upon opposition to the European imperialist Powers. Even the loosest political unity seems impossible because the several States have pursued their own separate paths for too long since the days when Islam poured like a leveling flood over the whole territory.

The moderates in the Pan-Arab movement restrict themselves to the Arabs of Asia. They want a kingdom that shall extend from the Red Sea to the Iranian and Turkish frontier—a kingdom under a single monarch. As long as King Feisal lived, there were two possible leaders—Feisal and ibn Saud. The rivalry between them may have stimulated each to seek the throne of a united Arab empire. Since Feisal's death there remains only

ibn Saud. What he himself aims at is unknown. Enthusiasts among his biographers say that it is a Pan-Arab empire. There are, however, few who have spoken with him personally, and perhaps nobody who knows his intentions. His objectives have obviously changed with the passage of time. The more he learns of the 'civilized' world the more averse he may be to ruling over any part of it. It cannot be denied that the civilization of the coastal district of Syria can hardly be distinguished from that of Europe, whilst towns like Aleppo and Baghdad more closely resemble Europe in their manner of living than they do Hail and Riad, the cities of the neighbouring kingdom.

For the moment—that is to say for as long as Palestine is the cynosure of all eyes and the centre of Pan-Arab agitation—ibn Saud is unpopular with the Pan-Arabs. They reproach him with being too Anglophil. As a matter of fact he has maintained an attitude of great reserve in the Palestine question. His protest against the suggested partition was the mildest of all the protests. He has not permitted the holding of congresses—whether Pan-Islamic or Pan-Arabic—on his territory in recent years. If it is really true (as reported by a news agency) that a strongly worded resolution on behalf of the Palestinian Arabs was drafted at Mecca in 1938, it has certainly never been made public. The agitation on behalf of Palestine, however, that overshadows everything else momentarily, must not be allowed to blind the eyes. Ibn Saud is a man who has already united several Arab principalities into a kingdom—and he is the only man to have done so without European help. His actions have hitherto always come as a surprise. He himself, like all pious Arabs, would no doubt answer the question as to what still lies before him with the words: 'Allah is great.' It is a sufficient answer, and in reality the only right answer in the University of the East.

For the moment therefore there only remain the ultra-moderates—the realists—among the Pan-Arabs. In regard to the ultimate aim they are the most moderate, but at the same time as regards its realization the most powerful, because they are numbered among those who to-day occupy ministerial posts and direct policy. Their centre is Baghdad. Their aim is a federation of Arabic States under Iraq leadership. They are working for

the abolition of customs, for a common currency, common diplomatic representation abroad and autonomy in domestic administration. In view of the immense differences between the Arabs of the north and the south, the east and the west, that would appear to be the sole realizable aim. Beginnings have already been made in certain quarters—notably between Saudi Arabia and Iraq. The fact that these two States, which were formerly bitter enemies, can approach one another so closely proves that a Pan-Arab federation is within the bounds of possibility.

The beginnings that have already been made have largely been due to English initiative. Herein lies the irony of the present situation. Originally England—and for reasons very largely directed against France—took pains to encourage the Pan-Arabic union of States and supported every effort at conciliation and each new friendship. At the same time the rapid growth of the Pan-Arab movement is due to the struggle with England—that is to say the fight against England in its capacity as protector of the Jews in Palestine. It would be a mistake to allow oneself to be influenced by present events in Palestine so far as to regard the whole problem from this standpoint only. This was proved by the Inter-Parliamentary Congress which met in Cairo on 7th October 1938 to discuss Palestinian affairs. The demands brought forward by the Radicals were similar to those propounded at Bludan, and met with the opposition of the Iraq delegation. Saudi Arabia was not even represented at the Congress. Notwithstanding their quarrels with England, the Arabs know very well that they cannot defend themselves alone against a covetous world and that England still is their best ally because as a 'satiated' Power she does not seek territorial aggrandizement, but only to safeguard the Empire—and that means peace.

English prestige has suffered severely in Palestine. Nevertheless this is true only on the surface of current political life. British influence has penetrated so deeply, to the very basis of Near Eastern life, that far ruder shocks would be necessary to destroy it. Moreover, if England should succeed in finding a pacific solution to the Palestine question, the sole obstacle would be removed that stands in the way of co-operation be-

tween the moderate Pan-Arabs and Great Britain at the moment of writing.

A very remarkable reciprocal action exists between the extension of 'pan'-ideals—that is to say of great racial or religious movements—beyond their birthplaces and the attempts made by the Great Powers either to restrain these movements or else to make them serve their own policies. Among the pan-ideals is that of Pan-Turanianism—though at present it plays no political part—whose last great representative was Enver Pasha, the man who, after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, sought with the aid of Soviet Russia to erect a new Turkish Empire in Turkestan, and who was crushed by the Soviets when they saw that he was not a Communist but a Nationalist. The Pan-Turanian ideal nevertheless contains many possibilities for the future. As Afghanistan serves as a buffer between India and Russian pressure from the north, so also does the country that we call Chinese Turkestan and of which nobody knows who is the real ruler. The Soviet and England are both trying to gain influence there; the suzerainty of China hardly even exists in name; and the Turkoman tribes are divided in their sympathies. Perhaps, however, they might unite under the banner of some unifying slogan with the help of their more civilized racial brother in the west.

No doubt that is a Utopian idea. But so was and still is the ideal of a Pan-Arabic empire stretching to Morocco, and so is the belief in a united movement of all Moslem peoples. Yet these Utopias, though they are only ideas as yet, are already so mighty that European Great Powers are trying to make use of them for their own ends. If England relies on the support of the Arabs in the Near East, Italy seeks that of Islam. In the course of his triumphal progress through Libya in the spring of 1937, Mussolini styled himself 'Protector of Islam'. And just as the English support for moderate Pan-Arabism meets with a rude return from Palestine, so Mussolini received his answer from Cairo from the mouth of Sheikh el Mahrab, who regards his mosque as the centre of Islam:

Only a man who professes the Mahometan faith, who believes in the essential truth of Islam, and who does everything that lies

in his power to carry out the teaching of Islam, can be regarded as the protector of Islam. No man who claims to be protector of Islam, and who does not possess these qualities, will ever be recognized as such by Moslems, even if he is of the Moslem faith. No non-Moslem will ever be recognized by Moslems as protector of Islam, no matter from what land he comes or to what religion he belongs.

Japan had a similar experience when she talked of a union of all Asiatics. In the summer of 1938, Japan held a conference in Istanbul of her diplomatic representatives in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Turkey. Japan's policy is making great strides in the sphere of economic penetration. The Turkish Government addressed a note of protest to the Japanese Government on the subject of the conference. For Angora has for years looked upon itself as the Asiatic opponent of Tokyo in Western Asia.

Moscow is another centre of propaganda. In Asia Minor as elsewhere in the world the Comintern and the Soviet Government go their separate ways. Since a religious movement can hardly be made the instrument of Communist propaganda, the Soviet Government supports the Pan-Arab movement. The instruction given by the Comintern in 1935 ran as follows:

The international imperialists, in the interest of their policy of robbery, have dismembered the Arabic countries and erected artificial frontiers between them. Nevertheless, although they are ruled by various imperialist Powers, the Arab Communists must try to create an anti-imperialist popular front that extends over all the Arab countries, on the basis of a programme containing demands that are capable of uniting all anti-imperialist forces in the Arab countries.

Fascism is the opponent of the Comintern. It is watchful and makes use of every opportunity. While England, partly intentionally and partly unconsciously, makes sport serve the interests of propaganda, and the French influence in Asia Minor rests on schools and French culture, the Italians make use of both methods. Everywhere modern Italian schools are being built; everywhere there are free scholarships for students desirous of attending Italian universities; everywhere Italian sports clubs are to be found. Alongside Fascism, National Socialism has

made its appearance, and in the short period of its foreign activity has already won a prominent position for itself.

The States of Asia Minor, that are still in some cases partly of the Middle Ages, have therefore the choice as to how they will model their present and future. It is a choice between democracy in the liberal English sense or beneath the banner of 'la Patrie', as in France; between Communism under Moscow's, or Pan-Asia under Tokyo's leadership; between Fascism or National Socialism; between the Pan-Arab and the Pan-Islam movements. All these ideals seek to establish themselves by means of wireless propaganda, money, and the use of economic and military advisers. It is a sort of vast competition between them—a fact that testifies to the importance of Asia Minor in the eyes of the world. In so far as the different systems of international policy tend to overlap, and the decisions taken in Pacific affairs influence those taken in Mediterranean politics and vice versa, the bridge leading from East to West must become a new centre of interest. If the various differences should one day be the cause of a general war, Asia Minor would no longer be merely the scene of impromptu guerrilla warfare, but a part of the world in which the Great Powers have prepared their respective positions by hard work over a number of years.

But we do not know how the individual States will behave in event of another conflict. We know the country itself. We have seen with astonishment how it has developed and how the Bedouin sheikh makes use of motor-cars and aeroplanes without having the faintest idea of how a combustion engine works or what difficult calculations and what brain-work have gone to its construction. We have seen how women, who five years ago slipped silently through the streets veiled in black, to-day go about in Paris fashions and behave just as they see people behaving every day on the films. We have seen how their clothes are ruined in a week because the East as yet makes no real distinction between day wear and night wear, and because in the old-style houses there are no wardrobes in which to hang clothes, but at most shelves or chests in which to lay them. We have seen the newspapers that appear in the capitals and that are modelled upon the European Press; they are sometimes authoritarian, sometimes subversive and inflammatory, or

again moderate and reserved, always different in different lands.

A German hears many pleasant things about Germany and many unpleasant ones about England and France. The Englishman, on the contrary, hears in private conversation only praise of England and criticism of all the other countries. In the course of his long history the Oriental has developed highly complicated forms of politeness beneath which he conceals his true thoughts and emotions. He is perfectly right. For Europe to-day is still interested—if we are honest we must admit it—in the Near East chiefly for selfish motives. It is for this reason that the various European nations tend to ask themselves: 'How will any particular State act towards us in time of trouble?' and not, or only as an afterthought: 'What must that Asiatic State do in its own interests?' The European has become increasingly accustomed to plan not only from the standpoint of State policy but also in every aspect of life. To-day things are being 'planned' even in Asia Minor, though chiefly by the Governments. The individual still waits to see what will happen. He does not look into the future, and still less does he try to mould the future.

For this reason we really know nothing. What will be the psychological effect on men and women who for thirteen hundred years have been forbidden to look upon any image of the human face or figure and who to-day are suddenly surrounded by statues, photographs and paintings? Will they have a different conception of themselves, will they attain to new knowledge of their own being and their capacities, after they have grown accustomed to having themselves portrayed? That is a question the range of which we can hardly measure, just as thirty or forty years ago it was inconceivable to archaeologists that their workmen should not possess a sufficiently practised eye to distinguish between a stone shaped by nature and one shaped by man. What are women thinking who have suddenly been drawn into public life after being concealed behind walls and beneath black veils for nearly two thousand five hundred years? For the veil was not an invention of Islam, but of the ancient Persian Empire, and the Arabs took it over with many other customs from the more cultured people whom they conquered. What do the unveiled women of Teheran and Angora think and hope for? What, on the other hand, do the still veiled women of Damascus,

Baghdad, and Mecca believe? What do they teach their children? Have they any influence over their men-folk? And these men who sit for hours in a café over a game of draughts or in conversation under the shade of a veranda to the accompaniment of the cool smoke of a hookah—are international politics anything more to them than a means to further their own little local intrigues? These men and their ancestors have never carried out a systematic international policy or a policy of conquest like that of Alexander, of the Romans, of Napoleon. The Asiatic peoples, the greatest conquering races of the world, passed like unseeing waves over the surrounding lands because the condition of equilibrium in their own country had been upset. What were the reasons for such an upsetting of equilibrium? A drought—a famine—an inundation—the migration of a race from the East that settled itself far over in the West—an inner fire that showed itself in the visions of one man who became a leader. But the emergence of individual personalities was not deliberate. Even Mahomet, whose influence was the most far-reaching and still exerts the greatest power to-day—even Mahomet did not plan what has been carried out since his day by his followers and successors. It came rather from the unconscious, irresistible force of a mass movement.

Heat has a twofold effect. It bestows upon humanity that indolence that is just perceptible in southern Germany, that increases on the southern confines of the Mediterranean, and that in the East has such a deep and all-embracing force that it is no longer a consciously enjoyable feeling, but in its very naturalness is a wholly unconscious instinctive form of life. But from the lassitude that has no idea of keeping to time, that loathes thoroughness and is astonished by any form of completion, from the fullness of passivity and contemplativeness, there break forth sudden waves of fever like the sudden eruptions of lava, fire, and clouds of cinders from the gentle and beautiful shape of Vesuvius. The heat—the fire—is always below. Its effect is incalculable. When will the next eruption occur? What is the reason for it? Where will it break out?

Many experts on the Near East believe that the days of the great eruptions are over, just as the days of the migration of the peoples, of blind popular movements, once ceased in Europe.



Others see in the renewed activity of Asia Minor not the results of European invasion and initiative during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but a great internal rebirth springing from the accumulated and repressed fervour of centuries. These Turks, Arabs, and Iranians have visions of new kingdoms arising in the near future that will be as powerful and brilliant as those of their ancestors. Others, again, deny that the great days of a Darius or of a Shah Abbas, the flourishing dynasties of the Omayyads or the Abbassids, can ever be restored. For the wealth, the gold, the perfumes of these ancient empires were the product of the labour of innumerable, unpaid, sweating, maltreated men—of slaves. A whole world of men and women laboured in order that their few rulers, who lived as gods in palaces, might enjoy a leisured, cultured, pleasurable existence bedecked with gold and jewels. Not even in the days of Justinian or Louis XIV did Europe know anything like it. Even in older days in Europe there was always a mean between the two extremes of the ruler himself and the poorest of the poor—a mean which in the course of centuries came to be termed the middle class. In Asia, on the contrary, there was nothing between the god-like rulers surrounded by their hardly less god-like ministers and servants, and the masses of the people.

Has any really decisive change come about as a result of railways, wireless, motor-cars, aeroplanes, the wearing of European trousers by the men and of silk stockings by the women? It is impossible to say yet. Everything is in a state of transition. The naïve hope of every student and of every ambitious man in the East to obtain a government post seems like a hardly recognizable survival from the days when any office, however humble, near the person of the monarch conferred upon its holder a sort of god-like quality. Even to-day it is enough for a swindler to display an ordinary printed acknowledgement from the Governor's office in order to extract money from ignorant villagers. For something of the majesty of the great descends upon the recipient of such a letter, and that alone suffices to make him appear mighty and to secure for him a clientele that hopes for an improvement in their lot through his intermediary.

This refers to the mass of the people. For those with whom Europeans speak, who tell us of their plans and successes and

depict the future of their nations, are modelled after the European pattern. They are like ourselves and easy to understand, since they reproduce our own ideas. But they are the exceptions. True, the *élite*, the leaders of every country are always numbered among such exceptions. But it is impossible as yet to tell how these Europeanized and Americanized leaders will behave towards their own peoples. Will they do well for themselves and continue to oppress those who have been oppressed for thousands of years? Have the people—the labourers in the fields—any glimmering yet of what is meant by the 'rights of man'? Will those who during the past twenty-five years have been induced as a consequence of their nationalist, and also to some extent religious, feelings to sacrifice themselves, to fight, to die, allow themselves to be influenced and possibly fettered by social claims and emotions in a future world conflict? Or, in the event of a peaceful evolution of humanity, will that State gain the greatest authority and influence whose citizens are the steadiest and most contented?

We do not know. The University of the East sets its student difficult problems and we have not yet discovered all the sources in which to seek for their solution. We can but persevere in our search and trust to the sources that have risen in the East and that are regarded by the East as the sole revelation—the books containing the Word of God. Among them Mahomet's message still stands highest in the Near East to-day. It is confirmed anew each day by the action of the elements in nature and in man. Day after day it is proclaimed aloud by the muezzin from the minaret. It teaches mankind to-day as of yore to yield to the unfathomable decrees of fate. It affords an answer to every question concerning the nature of the East:

'Allah is great. There is none greater than He.'

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